00025889

BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

The Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID.

LORD MELBOURNE

Uniform with this Volume, 3s. 6d. *each, with Portrait.*

THE QUEEN'S PRIME MINISTERS,

A SERIES OF POLITICAL BIOGRAPHIES.

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID,

AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SYDNEY SMITH.'

The Volumes will contain Portraits, and will be published at periodical intervals.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G. By J. A. FROUDE, D.C.L.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE. By HENRY DUNCKLEY, LL.D. ('Verax.')

SIR ROBERT PEEL. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M.P.

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON. By the MARQUIS OF LORNE, K.T.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P. By G. W. E. RUSSELL.

EARL RUSSELL. By STUART J. REID.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN. By SIR ARTHUR GORDON, G.C.M.G. &c.

THE EARL OF DERBY. By GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY. By H. D. TRAILL, D.C.L.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON, Limited,
St. Dunstan's House, FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

Photogravure by Annan & Swan

Lord Melbourne

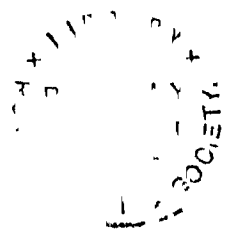
From an engraving by Bromley after a painting by Geo. Hayter. By permission of Messrs. Wm. Blackwood & Sons.

LORD MELBOURNE

BY

HENRY DUNCKLEY, M.A., LL.D.

25889
ac



Yy-K-63

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON
LIMITED
St. Dunstan's House
FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.
1890

[*All rights reserved*]

923.042-
Mel/Jun1/L.08
25889

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON

NOTE

THE latest and most authentic materials for a biography of Lord Melbourne are to be found in 'Lord Melbourne's Papers, edited by Lloyd C. Sanders, with a preface by the Earl Cowper, K.G.' (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889.) The volume was not published till after the following Memoir was begun, but it has been of great assistance to the author. His acknowledgments are also due to Mr. W. M. Torrens, whose 'Memoirs of Lord Melbourne,' in two volumes (Macmillan and Co., 1878), furnish some information gathered from personal sources which is not to be found elsewhere. Sir Denis Le Marchant's 'Memoir of Lord Althorp,' Lord Dalling's 'Life of Lord Palmerston,' and Mr. Spencer Walpole's 'Life of Lord John Russell,' throw interesting side-lights on Lord Melbourne's career. The 'Greville Memoirs' it is almost needless to mention. 'The Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper, K.G., preserved at Melbourne Hall,' and published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission (1888), supply ample notices of the Coke family. The author's thanks are due to F. J. Headlam, Esq., who, as an old Etonian, kindly inquired of the Provost of Eton for any record or tradition of Lord Melbourne's schooldays, and to Professor Jack, for similar inquiries made by him at Glasgow University.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

A NEW PATRICIAN HOUSE

PAGE

The Melbourne ancestry—Melbourne Hall—Sir John Coke, Secretary of State and political scapegoat—His sons—Puritan and Cavalier—A glimpse of Richard Baxter—Thomas Coke, Vice-Chamberlain and Court exquisite—Swift to Stella—The Lambs of Southwell—Sir Matthew Lamb and Charlotte Coke—The Church and Lincoln's Inn—The blending of two patrimonies—Joint result—Sir Peniston Lamb, first Viscount Melbourne . 1

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

The Melbourne household—Sir Peniston in Parliament—The ambitions of a great lady—An Irish peerage—With princes of the blood—Another Vice-Chamberlain in the family—The company at Melbourne House—William Lamb at Eton and Cambridge—A first flight in declamation—To be quoted by Fox—Law and philosophy at Glasgow—Home correspondence—Glasgow manners—The Miss Millars—Robert Hall's sermon—Lamb does not like the Dissenters 12

CHAPTER III

WAITING FOR THE TIDE

PAGE

Education finished; what next?—Some disadvantages on setting out—Sauntering—Decides for the law—Is called to the bar with his future Lord Chancellor—Lamb and Pepys—Goes on circuit—Actually gets a brief—A twofold crisis—Falls in love—Becomes an eldest son—A courtship not without sinister auguries—A double marriage and some maternal dreams fulfilled 33

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL LAND-SURVEYING

William Lamb in Parliament—The men he found there—Pitt and Fox—Family connections—Lord Althorp—William Huskisson—Quick fate of 'All the Talents'—Lamb moves the Address—A Constitutional question raised—Lamb stands by the Constitution—Veers towards administrative Radicalism—The Duke of York scandal—The Regency—The 'rising sun' will surely shine upon us—Not at all: has no predilections—Lamb loses his seat and is adrift 49

CHAPTER V

TROUBLES AT HOME

Lady Caroline Lamb—Sinister auguries fulfilling themselves—Advent of Lord Byron and 'Childe Harold'—The flirtations of Lady Caroline, serio-comic verging upon tragedy—William Lamb's conjugal ruminations—Marriage of Lord Byron and its results at Brocket—Waywardness or madness?—A separation planned and frustrated—The future Lord Lytton a sacrificial victim—Separation at last—A 'psalm of life' . 70

CHAPTER VI

A FOLLOWER OF MR. CANNING

PAGE

Again in Parliament—Influence of Huskisson—The charm of Canning—Lamb a Convert, but does not leave his party and sometimes votes with it—Votes for a committee of inquiry into the public expenditure—Speaks in favour of a reduction of expenditure—Votes for the suspension of Habeas Corpus and for the Six Acts—Opposed to Parliamentary Reform—The Catholic Association—Queen Caroline—Impecuniosity—A philosophy of credit—Proclaimed a political renegade, and 'out' once more 88

CHAPTER VII

CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND

Sudden turn of the political kaleidoscope—Canning in power—The Whig party rent asunder—Lamb Chief Secretary for Ireland, and a seat found for him—Leaves for Ireland—Death of Canning—Lamb's Irish achievements and experiences—Retains office under the Duke of Wellington and pays dearly for it—The Whigs cleared out—Huskisson's resignation and its consequences—Lamb secedes with the rest of the Canningites—Death of Viscount Melbourne 112

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE HOME OFFICE

Lamb, now Viscount Melbourne, in the House of Lords—Catholic Emancipation—Death of George IV.—The Administration on the shoals—A revolution in Paris, and a threatened one at home—The Duke is afraid to visit the City—The Canningites declare for Parliamentary Reform, and prepare to join the Whigs—Melbourne moves with them, but slowly—Earl Grey in power—Melbourne Home Secretary—The Reform Bill—Melbourne's mind quite made up—Work at the Home Office—Mr. Thomas Young and Mr. Francis Place 135

CHAPTER IX

PREMIER

PAGE

Further work at the Home Office—State of the Country—Earl Grey's apprehensions—Melbourne will have no repressive measures—The Dorchester labourers—Robert Owen—Irish policy of the Government—Growing dissensions in the Cabinet—The passing of the Reform Bill has severed the bond of union—O'Connell and the 'Rupert of debate'—Proposed secularisation of Church property in Ireland—'Johnny upsets the coach'—Earl Grey resigns—Melbourne accepts the premiership 155

CHAPTER X

EGO ET REX MEUS

Difficulties of office—The pranks of Lord Brougham—Lord Althorp goes to the House of Lords—Melbourne's letter to the King—His interview with the King at Brighton—Summarily dismissed and Sir Robert Peel sent for—Failure of an unconstitutional experiment—Melbourne avenged—Premier again—How he manages the King—Lord Brougham disposed of—Mrs. Norton; a second social misadventure—Hostility of the Lords—Lord John's 'Finality'—Radical discontent—Death of the King 177

CHAPTER XI

REGIUS PROFESSOR

The Queen's accession—Peculiarities of the new reign—A youthful Sovereign—Guidance and instruction needed—Lord Melbourne undertakes the task—How he discharged it—His devotion and self-denial—Melbourne and Baron Stockmar—The Coronation—The Court and the Whigs—The Bedchamber squabble—Chivalry and office—Melbourne's Church patronage—The Deanery of Exeter—Arnold and Thirlwall—At Court with Robert Owen 202

CHAPTER XII

HIS FALL

PAGE

Growing weakness of the Cabinet—Incidents of a protracted Dissolution—Canada—The Syrian question—Palmerston's autocracy in foreign affairs—Melbourne keeps the peace—The Queen's Marriage—His fatherly approval—The troubles of the Ministry thicken—Embarrassed finance—The Corn Laws—Defeat on the Sugar Duties—A general election—The majority of ninety-one—Melbourne resigns—His parting interview with the Queen 222

CHAPTER XIII

BROCKET

A speech at Melbourne—Brocket reminiscences—Augustus Lamb—Lord Egremont—The picture in the Great Saloon—Not left in utter loneliness—His interest in politics—Again in the House of Lords—A Windsor incident—Still ready to go if 'sent for'—His health steadily declining—Not included in the Ministerial combination of 1846—His last vote by proxy—An episode of 1832—The end 235

INDEX 245

LORD MELBOURNE

CHAPTER I

A NEW PATRICIAN HOUSE

The Melbourne ancestry—Melbourne Hall—Sir John Coke, Secretary of State and political scapegoat—His sons—Puritan and Cavalier—A glimpse of Richard Baxter—Thomas Coke, Vice-Chamberlain and Court exquisite—Swift to Stella—The Lambs of Southwell—Sir Matthew Lamb and Charlotte Coke—The Church and Lincoln's Inn—The blending of two patrimonies—Joint result—Sir Peniston Lamb, first Viscount Melbourne.

LORD MELBOURNE, the first of the Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria, and the subject of this memoir, was the son of Peniston, the first Viscount, by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Ralph Milbanke, of Halnaby, Yorkshire. He was born at Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire, on March 15, 1779. His father lived till 1828. Hence, to avoid confusion we shall have at once to drop the title by which he is universally known, and to speak of him for fifty years of his life as William Lamb, a name by which he is hardly known at all.

The place of his birth, from which also the family title was derived, suggests a previous history, and it will repay us to take a brief retrospective glance. We are about to see a

patrician house in the making. It will be interesting to observe how the materials were acquired and how the fabric was gradually built. Melbourne Hall was formerly the rectory house of the parish church of Melbourne, and from the reign of Henry II. had been annexed, together with the glebe and tithe, to the see of Carlisle. In 1628 Sir John Coke acquired possession on a lease for three lives, and in 1710, by an arrangement with the then bishop, confirmed by Act of Parliament, the lease was turned into freehold. Sir John Coke must be considered the most distinguished member of the Melbourne ancestry. He was the second son of Thomas Coke, of Trusley, near Derby, where the family had been settled for four generations as lords of the manor. The eldest son, Sir Francis Coke, Knight, took the patrimonial estates. The third son, George, entered the Church, becoming Bishop of Bristol and afterwards of Hereford. The second son, John, with whom we are now concerned, went to Trinity College, Cambridge, as a Foundation scholar. He was afterwards admitted a fellow, and is said by Fuller to have been Professor of Rhetoric. From some correspondence which remains, bearing the date 1588, it seems probable that he was attached in some capacity to the household of Lord Burghley. In 1591 we find him occupying a post in the Dockyard at Deptford, but the two following years were spent in travelling on the Continent. Among his correspondents at that time was the celebrated Isaac Casaubon. From the time of his return he was in close relations with Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, Treasurer of the Navy. He seems to have been employed by Greville in managing his private affairs as well as in the business of the Admiralty. In 1618, in consequence of the experience he had acquired, he was put upon a commission

appointed to inquire into the state of the Navy, and when the Duke of Buckingham became Lord High Admiral, Coke was at his instance appointed a Commissioner of the Navy. This office carried no fixed salary, but in 1621 the King, for his 'great services,' granted him certain allowances amounting to 300*l.* a year. In 1622 he was made one of the Masters of Requests; two years later he was knighted, and in September 1625, he was appointed one of the two principal Secretaries of State, and became a Privy Councillor. As Commissioner of the Navy he was employed in fitting out the expeditions to Cadiz and Rochelle, and as Secretary of State he accompanied the King on his visits to Scotland in 1633 and 1639. Since 1620 he had been a member of the House of Commons, sitting successively for Warwick, St. Germans, and Cambridge University.

His last journey with the King to Scotland was the climax of his fortunes, and the end of his public career. The King had put himself at the head of his army bent upon chastising the insolence of his Scottish subjects. He was forced into an ignominious treaty, and came back out witted and disgraced. 'The King,' says Clarendon, 'was very melancholic, and quickly discerned that he had lost reputation at home and abroad, and those Councillors who had been most faulty, either through want of courage or wisdom (for at that time few of them wanted fidelity), never afterwards recovered spirit enough to do their duty, but gave themselves up to those who had so much over-witted them; every man shifting the fault from himself and finding some friend to excuse him, and it being yet necessary that so infamous a matter should not be covered with absolute oblivion it fell to Secretary Coke's turn (for whom nobody cared), who was then near four score years of age, to be

made the sacrifice, and upon pretence that he had omitted the writing what he ought to have done, and inserted somewhat he ought not to have done, he was put out of his office.' Strafford opposed his removal, partly out of dislike to his successor, Sir Henry Vane, but was unable to overcome the secret influence of the Queen. The old man took his dismissal philosophically, as he might well do at his age. He writes to his son at Melbourne that he is bringing a great family upon him to pester his house, but not to be a charge upon his purse. He wants the study to be got ready, as he is bringing down sundry books, 'though not very choice,' to fill it. He has sent to Barbary for hawks, and his daughter is to be sure to 'brew a store of beer against March.' He is also having a gown made for the rector whom he has just presented to the living. It is at present at the dyer's, but it shall be 'made up in convenient time.' Unfortunately, he was not long allowed to live in peace at Melbourne Hall. When the Civil War broke out he was harassed by both parties, neither having full confidence in him. The Royalist leanings of the townspeople brought over a detachment of Parliamentary soldiers from Derby, and their commander, Major Swallow, took up his quarters at the Hall, where he was visited by his friend Richard Baxter, the Puritan divine. While there Baxter began writing the treatise which has brought repose to so many souls, his 'Saints' Everlasting Rest.' That was the rest towards which Sir John was hastening. Forced to quit Melbourne, he slowly made his way to Tottenham, with a pass provided for him by his son, and there, at the house of his relative, Alderman Lee, in September 1644, he finished his long pilgrimage.

Sir John Coke left two sons, John and Thomas. They both had seats in the Long Parliament, but took opposite

sides. John, who was knighted in 1633, subscribed the Solemn League and Covenant, and was one of the Commissioners appointed by the House of Commons to receive the King at the hands of the Scots' army. He died in 1650, without issue. Thomas, who succeeded to the family estates, adhered to the cause of the King. He was declared incapable of sitting, fined 500*l.* in 1648, and again 2,200*l.* in 1650, for delinquency to the Commonwealth. During a part of this latter year he was imprisoned in the Tower by the order of the House. He left an only child, John Coke, who became member for Derby, and at least achieved the distinction of being mentioned in Hume's History. In his speech from the throne on opening his first Parliament James II. informed both Houses that in levying additional forces he had employed many Catholic officers, and in order to do so had dispensed with the law requiring a test to be administered to all persons holding office. The Commons voted an address against the dispensing power. 'The address,' says Hume, 'was expressed in most respectful and submissive terms, yet it was very ill received by the King, and his answer contained a flat denial, uttered with great warmth and vehemence. The Commons were so daunted with this reply that they kept silence a long time, and when Coke, member for Derby, rose up and said, "I hope we are all Englishmen, and not to be frightened with a few hard words," so little spirit appeared in that assembly, often so refractory and mutinous, that they sent him to the Tower for bluntly expressing a free and generous sentiment.' Both father and son had thus the honour of being sent to the Tower by the order of the House of Commons, one for sympathising with Charles I., the other for speaking out too boldly against the illegal proceedings of James II. The

discipline of the Tower was wasted on John Coke. He was ready to act in accordance with his sense of an Englishman's duty when the time came. In November and December 1688 we find him busy through his agents in enlisting a Derbyshire regiment for the Prince of Orange, and from the accounts forwarded to him at his London quarters, 'Mrs. Warner's, in Surry Street, over against the Maypole in the Strand,' he would appear to have borne the greater part of the expense. He took the post of Lieutenant-Colonel, and the Earl of Devonshire had the chief command. A despatch from Marshal Schomberg, dated Whitehall, February 1689, orders the Earl to report the number of his effective troops to His Majesty, and to hold them in readiness for a speedy march.

After the Revolution John Coke travelled a good deal abroad, his only son Thomas filling his place at Melbourne Hall. Thomas Coke is described as handsome, clever, of winning manners, and universally popular. His career affords proof that he was well equipped with social and courtly qualities. He represented the county of Derby in the House of Commons, with Lord Hartington for his colleague, and it appears from his correspondence that it was to him chiefly his constituents looked for the protection of their local interests. One letter out of many that were addressed to him deserves perhaps a passing notice on account of the light it sheds upon the state of the Poor Laws. By a recent Act power had been conferred upon the county justices to compel persons, under a penalty of 10*l.*, to take poor parish children as apprentices. The Derbyshire magistrates were forcing these apprentices on the clergy, and the Rev. John Ward of Mickle Over writes that an apprentice girl is to be put upon him by an indenture

wherein he 'must covenant to teach her the art and mystery of husbandry.' Mr. Ward complains that he is quite unable to fulfil this covenant. Husbandry is not practised by the clergy, as 'being unsuitable to their holy function, and not agreeable to the nature and tenure of their church livings.' Understanding that a new law is about to be made for the better relief of the poor, he suggests that a clause should be inserted exempting the clergy from being compellable to receive such apprentices, or that if they cannot be wholly relieved, they shall be assessed in some moderate sum by way of equivalent. 'I know none like yourself,' Mr. Ward concludes, 'to whom I could with that hope and expectation address my submissive desires.'

Thomas Coke married Mary, daughter of the second Earl of Chesterfield, built himself a house in London, and figured as a man of fashion. His marriage brought him into close connection with the Lord Treasurer, and the same year, 1706, in which Godolphin was raised to the peerage, Coke was appointed Vice-Chamberlain in the household of Queen Anne, and made a Privy Councillor. This office he held for twenty years. Ministers came in and went out, one dynasty succeeded another, but, like the Vicar of Bray, Thomas Coke kept his place at court almost to the end of the reign of George I. He must have been a born Polonius, knowing how to make himself agreeable to a matronly sovereign of the purest morals, and to the foreign ladies who graced the court of her successor. His position secured him an acquaintance with the wits who hung upon the skirts of the ministries of Queen Anne, and his dandified airs exposed him to the raillery of Pope. His portraiture has been recognised, perhaps by mistake, in the 'Rape of the Lock':—

(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.)
With earnest eyes and round unthinking face,
He first his snuff-box opened, then the case.

But his fine ways as well as his occasional impecuniosity are better shown by the contents of a bill which he left unsettled when he left London for Melbourne in 1701. An unfortunate tradesman, John Arnold, thus writes after him: 'I have seen Sir Christopher Hailes several times since you left London, but he tells me he has no money for me. Really, sir, my necessities are so urgent at present that I am obliged to insist on your Honour's promise made to me at your departure, which I hope (after your Honour has considered my case) you will perform by remitting the money by the first opportunity: for 16 months shaving head and face, 11*l.*; for 12 times cleaning your Honour's teeth, 6*l.*; for curing your page's legs, and others of your servants, what your honour pleases; for Naples soap, 2*l.* 10*s.*; for orange flower water, 16*s.*; the Frenchman's bill 18*l.*—total 38*l.* 6*s.*'

We get one or two glimpses of the Vice-Chamberlain in Swift's 'Journal to Stella.' Swift's first visit to Windsor was rather sudden. He missed his portmanteau on the way, and had to borrow one of Bolingbroke's shirts to go to court in. He afterwards went down more leisurely for a week at the invitation of Bolingbroke, and when the week was over, and Bolingbroke went to London, he resolved to stay on. 'The Vice-Chamberlain,' he says, 'and Mr. Masham and the Green Cloth have promised me dinners. I shall want but four till Mr. Secretary returns.' 'The Green Cloth,' he remarks with satisfaction, 'is the best table in England, and costs the Queen a thousand pounds a month

while she is at Windsor or Hampton Court.' In 1709 Coke had married a second time. His wife was Mary Hale, one of the maids of honour and a court beauty. Swift does homage to her reputation. 'Mr. Coke, the Vice-Chamberlain, made me a long visit this morning, and invited me to dinner, but the toast, his lady, was unfortunately engaged to Lady Sunderland.' Again, the next morning, 'Mr. Vice-Chamberlain lent me his horses to ride about and 'see the country.' If the Vice-Chamberlain treated everybody with as much consideration as he did Swift, his popularity is easily explained.

Thomas Coke died a rich man. Besides the salary which he had enjoyed for twenty years, a grateful sovereign had given him a Tellership in the Exchequer and the grant of a reversion in the Customs for two lives worth 500*l.* a year. Most of his property, in addition to the family estates, was settled on an only son, with remainder to his daughter Charlotte. They were both children by the second marriage, and being still young at the time of their father's death they spent some years with their mother's relatives in Herefordshire. In 1740 Charlotte was married to Mr. Matthew Lamb, and on the death of her brother a few years later, the whole of the Coke property became hers and her children's.

Mr. Matthew Lamb was one of the luckiest of men. He was one of two brothers, the sons of Mr. Matthew Lamb, a solicitor of long standing in the town of Southwell, Nottinghamshire. It was till lately a quiet place, of faded looks, as if it belonged to an earlier world. There still lingers about it an unmistakable air of greatness in decay. The church is one of the finest in England, a splendid example of Norman and Early English architecture, full of

monumental tombs and effigies of prelates long since gone; close to it are the remains of what was once a palace of the Archbishop of York, where Cardinal Wolsey liked to live. It has lately been made, as we all know, the seat of a bishopric, and mitre and crosier may again be seen on the altar steps. Such old towns are the chosen nests of leading country solicitors, and in Southwell Matthew Lamb the elder plied his profession for half a century. He was the confidential adviser of the Cokes of Melbourne Hall, and of many of the neighbouring gentry. He had a brother Peniston who practised at Lincoln's Inn, made large earnings, lived frugally, and put by almost all he made. Of Matthew's two sons, Robert, the elder, entered the Church, became successively Dean and Bishop of Peterborough, and inherited the wealth of his uncle Peniston. But the bishop was a bachelor, like his uncle, and at his death the accumulated spoils of the Church and the law came into the possession of his younger brother Matthew. Their father had left them 100,000*l.* in equal shares, but the whole flowed at last in the same channel. Matthew was a man of ability, quite equal to the making of a fortune for himself, if several fortunes had not been left him. He followed his uncle Peniston's profession, settled in London, was made perpetual solicitor to the revenue of the Post Office, and as confidential adviser had among his clients the Earls of Salisbury and Egmont. In the year after his marriage he had bought himself into Parliament for the borough of Stockbridge. In 1746 he purchased Brocket Hall, the old residence of the Winnington family, gradually buying back the farms which had formerly been a part of the estate, and turning them into a verdant demesne through which the river Lea wanders leisurely and drowsily on its way to the

Thames. It was easy for a man in such a position to obtain a baronetcy, which he did. His brother's position at Peterborough suggested a more dignified seat than Stockbridge. Lord FitzWilliam had the usual influence of a landlord over the scot and lot voters who formed the constituency of the cathedral city, and the steward of the Chapter officiated as returning officer. Matters were easily arranged, and during the last few years of his life Sir Matthew sat for Peterborough. He died worth property which was estimated at nearly half a million, besides half a million more in ready money. With these ample revenues, one half entirely at his own disposal, his only son Sir Peniston Lamb began to reign. They were resources which skilful hands might employ in raising the family fortunes still higher.

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

The Melbourne household—Sir Peniston in Parliament—The ambitions of a great lady—An Irish peerage—With princes of the blood—Another Vice-Chamberlain in the family—The company at Melbourne House—William Lamb at Eton and Cambridge—A first flight in declamation—To be quoted by Fox—Law and philosophy at Glasgow—Home correspondence—Glasgow manners—The Miss Millars—Robert Hall's sermon—Lamb does not like the Dissenters.

WILLIAM LAMB, the future Premier, was born at Melbourne Hall on March 13, 1779. Territorial associations are dear to a new family. It was proper that he should first see the light of heaven in the place which had given a peerage title to his father, but he was taken up to London to be christened. The ceremony is one which, when prudently arranged, with due publicity and a proper choice of sponsors, affords an introduction at once to the Church and to the world, giving a promise of two very different sets of blessings. The boy was not born into an empty home. He had a brother nine years older than himself, who bore his father's name, and experienced the disadvantages which, as some equipoise to greater material fortune, are generally the lot of eldest sons. The Melbourne family enlarged itself slowly. After three years a third son, Frederick, was born. He lived to enjoy the advantage of having a brother and a

brother-in-law occupying important positions in the State. Next came George, who acquired some local celebrity as a politician, and ran the gauntlet of certain contests at Westminster. Then in 1787 the last and brightest addition was welcomed in a daughter Emily, who became the wife of Earl Cowper, and afterwards, as Lady Palmerston, prolonged to our own time that commingling of social and political influences which was the special mark of an earlier generation.

These were as yet remote and unforeseen developments. We must dwell for a moment upon the earlier characteristics of their family life. It is interesting to see in what direction those who had command of the helm meant to steer, and how they spread their sails to the breeze. This will serve to illustrate the tone and temper of the period, and help us to appreciate the circumstances which told upon our hero's susceptible years from the time he left the cradle till he reached manhood.

In this case there was never but one helmsman, the brilliant lady who, at twenty years of age, became the wife of Sir Peniston Lamb. She was not a great heiress, and if it is true, as her husband is said to have boasted, that on his marriage he gave his wife's portion back to her in diamonds, it may be inferred that her beauty and accomplishments were her chief and sufficient dower. Sir Peniston did not want money. On the threshold of life he had stepped into possession of what passed then for a abulously large fortune. The thrifty accumulations of several generations of lawyers, churchmen, and placemen had fallen into his hands, amounting, we have seen, to nearly a million. The day of colossal fortunes had not then come. Manufactures were in their infancy, and commercial operations

on a scale with which we are familiar were unknown. The race of great contractors came in with railroads and steam. A revolution in the iron trade had sent a fortunate inventor to the House of Lords, and success in banking was soon to pave the way for another aspirant; but the land, the law, and the Church were as yet the chief avenues to wealth, and it would have been regarded almost as sacrilege to bestow a peerage upon plutocratic distinction otherwise achieved. Sir Peniston had some slight recommendations in addition. His uncle was Bishop of Peterborough, and his sister was married to Lord Belasyse, son of Viscount Fauconberg. The second Lord Fauconberg married Mary, daughter of Oliver Cromwell, and the Calendar of State Papers for the first and second years after the Restoration contains two entries which may be placed in contrast. One records a certificate by Thomas Viscount Fauconberg 'of his laying hold of the King's gracious pardon, promised to all who should lay hold of it within forty days,' the other the 'grant to Mark Milbanke, of Halnaby, co. York, of the dignity of a baronet.'

Sir Peniston made it his first business after his father's death to obtain a seat in the House of Commons. It may be taken for granted that he cared nothing about politics, any more than his father had done. But the King, who was the fountain of honour, took a deep interest in the proceedings of the House. He read the lists of the votes and knew to a man who figured in the ministerial majorities. To have a vote and to place it at the minister's disposal was a proof of loyalty certain, sooner or later, to receive a grateful recognition. Besides, it was obviously the part of a new man, one of the latest accessions to the conservative forces of the nation, to stand up for the Crown. Lord

Belasyse had succeeded his father-in-law at Peterborough, so that Sir Peniston had to look elsewhere. But there was no difficulty. There was generally a seat in the market to be had at a price. George Selwyn was the joint owner of Luggershall, a Wiltshire hamlet long since lost to fame, but then returning two members. One of these seats was assigned to Sir Peniston. He had to pay for it no doubt, and George Selwyn had a private account of his own with the Government. He had a place in the pension list on the strength of the use he made of his proprietary rights. It was a good time for a parliamentary speculator. Lord North was beginning his administration. He wanted a safe majority, and he was familiar with the means of obtaining one. Hence, within a year of Sir Peniston's marriage, and while he was receiving the felicitations of his friends on the birth of a son and heir, his Majesty was pleased to create him Baron Melbourne of Kilmore in the county of Cavan. The new peer had never been in Ireland, had not a jot of interest there, and knew nothing of the country. But the King drew at his pleasure upon Irish peerages and pensions. He played in a different style the game of Charles I. He used his prerogative in one country as a means of governing the other. Not for all his fortune would Sir Peniston have been able at that time to win a British peerage.

It was in the House of Commons that votes were wanted, and with an Irish peerage he could still sit there. The King bestowed his honours with a keen sense of thrift. The man whom he made a baron to-day would readily comprehend that his further elevation depended upon himself. Lord Melbourne placed his vote unreservedly at the disposal of the Government. All through the disastrous struggle with the revolted colonies he gave the King and his minister an

undeviating support. As the crisis of the administration approached, Burke brought in his Bill for promoting economical reform, and 'the better security of the independence of Parliament.' Dunning followed with his famous resolution, that the power of the Crown 'had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished.' Lord Melbourne, of course, voted against both. In preparing for the final struggle in a new Parliament, the minister anxiously reviewed his forces. The lists of those who had stood firm, and of those who had shown signs of defection, were critically scanned in the royal closet. Lord Melbourne's record was unexceptionable, but there were social influences at work which might suggest some deviation even to him. His fidelity was probably strengthened by his being made a viscount. The first step in the peerage followed close upon the birth of his eldest son; the next came two years after the birth of his second.

During the intervening ten years Lord Melbourne was worthily seconded by his wife. What he did in Parliament by simply walking into the lobby, she did in society by far more elaborate and costly exertions. Lady Melbourne made her husband aware that it was his duty to maintain an establishment in keeping with his rank. He bought the house in Piccadilly which the first Lord Holland had built, but had lately left for the historic mansion at Kensington which excites so much interest to-day. The house was thenceforth called Melbourne House, but only for a time. There was another change of ownership under circumstances which show how amiability may be seconded by versatile tastes, and how two wishes, each the fruition of the other, may unconsciously ripen in different minds, even on a subject so prosaic as a choice of dwellings. Some

years later the Duke of York happened to say to Lady Melbourne how much he would wish to have a house like hers. Her ladyship at once said how she had often wished to have a house like his. Since their mutual happiness could be so easily augmented it would have been foolish not to make the exchange. Accordingly the King's consent was obtained, the Duke took possession of Melbourne House, and Lady Melbourne, her lord dutifully acquiescent, removed to Whitehall, where she could 'look out upon the Park.' The houses of course exchanged names. There must have been some sacrifice on the part of Lady Melbourne. Her former residence had been decorated regardless of expense by the first artists of the day, and the same rich assortment of 'nymphs and cherubs' would hardly be found at her new abode. But it was something to have obliged a royal duke, and something also to live in a house which a royal duke had occupied. Some odour of royalty could hardly fail to be left behind.

It will not do to accept too literally the descriptions given us of the hospitalities at Melbourne House, and of the exalted personages who were wont to seek a welcome there. That the hospitalities were sumptuous may be readily believed. Certain it is also that the hostess flew at high game and would measure with instinctive discernment the social value of her guests. We are told who were there, which is equivalent to telling us who were not, and the negative test is perhaps the more conclusive one as to character. Lord Melbourne was hardly the man to attract to his table the wit and genius of the day. He was a dawdler in politics, a dawdler in art, a dawdler even in play. Languid, insipid, aimless, illiterate to an almost inconceivable degree, he can hardly have been chosen as a

companion for his own sake, except by men like himself who would not form a very brilliant circle. The chief attraction doubtless was the incomparable hostess, and nothing is better established than the selective worth of feminine charms. Mr. Fox is said to have been a frequent visitor. He knew every corner of the house, having lived in it, and would naturally feel himself at home. He had not yet outlived the shadiest period of his shady youth. The son of a man who had mastered all the arts of corruption, and grown rich on public plunder; who had himself, while at Eton, polluted the morals of the place, and made juvenile profligacy fashionable, he had not yet begun that compensatory part of his career which made men forget the vices of his earlier years, and finally enshrined him in the Whig pantheon as a creature little less than divine.

The Prince of Wales was a constant guest at Melbourne House. He had already taken some steps in his novitiate of debauchery, and gave full promise of his riper achievements. We find the King writing confidentially to Lord North begging him to buy back at any reasonable price the letters which the Prince had sent to Perdita Robinson. Let us hope he had not become so very bad as yet; but, at any rate, the first bloom of dissoluteness was upon him. The King was at length prevailed upon to give him a separate establishment at Carlton House, with one-half the allowance which his friends thought requisite. Lord Melbourne was appointed one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber. It was almost the same position that his grandfather had filled at the court of George I., and must at times have involved duties equally delicate. But, like his grandfather, he weathered all storms, and was still at his post when the allied sovereigns visited London thirty years later. What

had best be regarded as inscrutable are the qualifications which led to his appointment and kept him in it. At the ball which was held at Carlton House when the Prince took possession, he is said to have received 'the congratulations of all that was best-born and most beautiful in the land,' and that 'on none were admiring eyes more fixed than on Lady Melbourne, then, perhaps, at the zenith of her popularity and attraction.'

Lady Melbourne had another admirer. Mr. Torrens devotes a couple of pages to Lord Egremont. He says that by the admission of his contemporaries 'there was in his voice and manner a fascination for women, and even for men, which neither knew how to resist.' We are told that at Melbourne House he was a constant guest, and that through a long course of years his friendship and sympathy were never wanting. 'Some of the brightest scenes of William Lamb's childhood were in Petworth Park, where he and his brothers used to gambol all day long.' To introduce the name of this wealthy nobleman merely to exalt the fame of Lady Melbourne's hospitality seems needless and injudicious. It is a pity to put on gilding which, as it has been put on, it is almost a duty to take off We are reminded that 'old Horace snarls at Egremont in his characteristic way as "a worthless young fellow,"' and an explanation is added which seems to extract the sting Mr. Greville shall tell us what he was as an old fellow 'Lord Egremont was eighty-one the day before yesterday. He has reigned here for sixty years, with great authority and influence. He is shrewd, eccentric, and benevolent, and has always been munificent and charitable in his way. . . . His course, however, is nearly run, and he has the mortification of feeling that, though surrounded with

children and grandchildren, he is almost the last of his race, and that his family is about to be extinct. All his own children are illegitimate.' His fascination had perhaps been found irresistible, and enormous wealth, profusely lavished, can cover a multitude of social sins ; but character should count for something in gratuitously enumerating for our admiration the intimates and bosom friends of a great lady's household. Of course, we are not to forget the moral perspective which is proper in looking back upon the eighteenth century, and it would be unjust to set up any austere standard in estimating the proprieties or improprieties of Melbourne House. Nevertheless it is impossible to dispense with a standard of some sort, and it is not to be lowered to suit the exigencies of complacent biography. Lady Melbourne and her husband were not unequally mated. They took their several ways, and probably had not much right to complain of each other.

With these aids one may perhaps be able to picture the domestic scenes on which their second son would open his large eyes when he began to see and feel on his own account. The children lived chiefly at Brocket. The old Hall had been enlarged and beautified by Sir Matthew Lamb. When Lady Melbourne succeeded to power, she took it into her own hands and did with it as she had done with their place in London. She lavished upon it every kind of adornment, and turned both Hall and grounds into such an earthly paradise as the decorator and the landscape gardener can create. A greater artist was employed to do justice to the charms of her children. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had twice painted a portrait of the mother, was persuaded to make a study of the three elder boys, and 'the Affectionate Brothers,' in which they are represented as a group at play,

ranks among his most graceful and finished compositions. Lady Melbourne gave as much time to her children as could be spared from the exacting claims of the fashionable society in which she lived, moved, and had her being. It is not necessary to waste words upon maternal love. Epithets are but foolish when employed to paint instinctive passion. Lady Melbourne loved them all, but is said to have shown a marked difference in favour of her second son. This difference, discernible when they were young, lasted till this second son had grown to manhood, and the death of the eldest put an end as between them to all preference. Peniston, the eldest, was his father's favourite, and the love lavished upon him seems to have been so absorbing that none was left for his brother, who had to look to his other parent for compensation. Of Lady Melbourne it is said in reference to her second son, in language which sounds extravagant, if not mysterious, 'Soon she felt, however, that if the little stranger was to be prized and loved, all must come from her;' and then we are told that she 'vowed within herself devotion' to his 'upbringing and future destiny.' How this maternal love displayed itself, or how the boy was brought up during the first eleven years of his life, there is no evidence to show. Perhaps it was not thought worth recording. The importance of early training was insufficiently felt among the higher classes. The traditions of country life influenced their homes, and produced an indifference to intellectual occupations. Children were left pretty much to themselves. They picked up their English and the rudiments of knowledge from the servants, and their education was supposed only to begin when they went to a public school. Lord Althorp, living under the same roof which sheltered a famous library, was

taught to read by his mother's Swiss footman. The stimulus afforded to the manufacturing classes by mechanical inventions and the sudden outburst of industry had not yet reached the aristocracy, and would not reach them for a long time to come. They little dreamed of the character of the epoch upon which they were entering. The fabric of landed ascendency was still undisturbed, and they acted as if they imagined that it would last for ever. Hence they took no pains to equip the rising generation for the shock of new opinions and for the social changes which were rapidly preparing. It may be doubted whether Lady Melbourne's devotion to the welfare of her favourite son assumed any higher form than a resolve to quicken his ambition and assist him in forming those political connections which would help him on the road to place and power.

In 1790, when eleven years old, William Lamb was sent to Eton, where he had as class-fellows John Bird Sumner, who became Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Ellis, afterwards Lord Stuart de Rothesay, the Marquis of Tullibardine, Charles Stewart, afterwards third Marquis of Londonderry, and the famous Beau Brummel. Among his contemporaries were Hallam the historian, Denman the future Lord Chief Justice, Shadwell the Vice-Chancellor, and Assheton Smith, the prince of fox-hunters. The only memorial left of William Lamb at Eton is a copy of verses in the 'Musæ Etonenses' which show at least that he had made some proficiency in the mysteries of Latin versification, and we are able to state on the highest authority that he 'got a good deal of distinction as a scholar.' The verses bear the date 1793. In 1796, his last year at Eton, he was in the sixth form. This record is pretty well for a boy who had no spur to exertion, and it probably does him less

than justice. Eleven hours of class work in the week left the greater part of every day in his own hands, and what he did with it lay with himself. The taste for reading, which was one of Lamb's best points in after years, must have been acquired early. He had no liking for outdoor amusements. He never took kindly to the autumn stubble or the hunting field. He preferred a book and a reverie. As he grew up he showed a great aptitude for making verses. He always had a large stock of poetical images at command, and could lay claim to a good ear for melody and rhythm. These accomplishments it is fair to ascribe to his Eton studies; if he had left Eton without them, they would hardly have been acquired afterwards. A stronger contrast than that presented in these respects between himself and his younger contemporary and future colleague, Lord Althorp, can hardly be imagined. Lord Althorp was delighted to roam the fields with dog and gun. He was a lover of the ring. He stole off to enjoy the 'pugilistic displays of Jackson and Cribb,' and handled the gloves himself with no ordinary skill. At Harrow he was set to read Blair's 'Sermons,' and found Johnson's Dictionary useful in helping him to understand the fine words. Fine words were quite in the line of William Lamb, but a bout at gloves would have killed him.

In 1796 he went to Cambridge, entering as fellow-commoner at Trinity. His sole college triumph was to win the declamation prize at the end of his second year by an essay on 'the progressive improvements of mankind.' The essay was of course printed, and a copy sent to Mr. Fox, who, mindful of his friendships at Melbourne House, took occasion to quote a sentence from it in one of his House of Commons speeches, devoted chiefly to a eulogium on the character of Francis, Duke of Bedford. The passage which

had this celebrity conferred upon it runs as follows : 'Crime is a curse only to the period in which it is successful ; but virtue, whether fortunate or otherwise, blesses not only its own age, but remotest posterity, and is as beneficial by its example as by its immediate effects.' Lamb lived to see through the fallacy of this argument and to make fun of it. The virtues which the passage was quoted to illustrate are lost, it is to be feared, upon the present age, to say nothing of a remoter posterity. Francis, Duke of Bedford, lives only in the pages of Junius, and Junius himself is beginning to afford a proof that literary reputations derived from the politics of the hour are almost as mortal as the men who made them. It would be cruel as well as absurd to visit an undergraduate's compositions with stringent criticism, but this piece of prize declamation is interesting, inasmuch as it displays for the first time those qualities which characterised the matured performances of its author. It affords evidence of wide if desultory reading, and of a susceptible and versatile mind ; but we fail to discern in it even the promise of a capacity for severe thinking. Facts are resolved into metaphors and lost in boundless generalisations, while flowing periods satisfy the ear but get no further. In the course of a dozen lines we find man emerging from the woods and caverns, assembling societies, founding cities, instituting laws, and cultivating learning. Then the arts reap their noblest triumphs, the canvas glows with animation, the marble swells beneath the chisel into life. Then also 'Philosophy in her colonnades and gardens dictated her solemn truths, Eloquence poured her loudest, and Poetry breathed her most enchanting strains.' We come next to the 'unwieldy empire of Rome,' the descent of the 'barbarous hordes' from the north, and the 'age of sterility'

which followed. From such vicissitudes we have been rescued by the art of printing, which, 'by giving permanency to the productions of the intellect, makes successive changes but so many steps in the path of progress.' The philosophy is optimistic, and this is perhaps its best quality, but such exercitations were hardly promising for a budding legislator. Far other powers than were here displayed would be necessary to sway opinion in the House of Commons.

The compliment of quoting this dissertation in the House of Commons was almost the discharge of a debt which Fox owed to his young friend. The previous January Lamb had broken out in political rhyme, the provocation coming from that brilliant coterie of Tory wits who were doing their best to cover Fox and his adherents with ridicule. His epistle to the editor of the 'Anti-Jacobin' was published in the 'Morning Chronicle' of January 17, 1798. It was his first appearance in print, and it marks his starting-point in politics, fixed by his social sympathies rather than by anything in the shape of matured opinion. The lines would require a glossary to make them intelligible, and they are hardly worth quoting. A sample, including one which was deemed the best, will show that they were not wanting in the spice of personality:

> I swear by all the youths that Malmesbury chose,
> By Ellis' sapient prominence of nose,
> By Morpeth's gait, important, proud, and big,
> By Leveson-Gower's crop-imitating wig.

The 'Anti-Jacobin' returned the fire, Canning himself supplying powder and shot:

> Bard of the borrowed lyre, to whom belong
> The shreds and remnants of each hackney'd song,
> Whose verse thy friends in vain for wit explore,
> And count but one good line in eighty-four.

The retort told with fatal effect. Lamb did not again try his hand at lampoons.

As a younger son with uncertain prospects, it was desirable that Lamb should choose a profession, and the bar had been pointed out to him as likely to afford a suitable career. It might prove to be of solid worth if his talents developed in that direction, and in any case it would serve to employ his time till he could find an opening in Parliament. Accordingly he was entered at Lincoln's Inn during his second year at Trinity, and ran the scholastic and legal courses together. Here he was on ancestral ground, some considerable portion of the family fortunes had been made at the bar, and it was, perhaps, possible to dream of a Lord Chancellorship. But fagging industry was not yet in his line, and never was to be. Politics might open its portals on easy terms, but his legal studies would not show him the way to the woolsack. In the meantime, as a finish to his collegiate studies, it was decided that he should spend a year or two at one of the Scottish Universities. Dugald Stewart was the great attraction at Edinburgh, but Glasgow had the preference. Professor Millar filled the chair of history and law at that university. He had dedicated his 'Historical View of the English Government' to Mr. Fox, whose advice, perhaps, determined the selection. Lamb had a sufficiently aristocratic introduction to the homely seat of learning on the Clyde. The Duke of Bedford applied to Lord Lauderdale, and Lord Lauderdale wrote to the professor, conveying in language which was, perhaps, not quite faultless, the most satisfactory assurances as to the character and abilities of the young student: 'He is a younger son of Lord Melbourne's. He has the reputation and, I believe, really possesses, uncommon talents.

He means to go to the English bar, with a view to follow the law as a profession. He is the only person I have ever yet recommended to you of whom I think I could with any safety say that you will have real comfort and satisfaction in having him as a pupil.' Lord Lauderdale must have been strangely inconsiderate in his previous recommendations, or grievously reckless of the professor's comfort, and it was high time to make amends by sending him at last a model young man. William Lamb spent one winter and part of another at Glasgow, residing with Professor Millar. He attended the professor's class in history and law, and went to Professor Mylne for metaphysics. There was a Debating club in the university, and Mr. Torrens is able to assure us that he took a 'constant and brilliant part' in its discussions, 'being distinguished for aptitude of historic illustration, and for caustic humour in reply.' On this point we must be permitted to have some doubts. Scotch students, at any rate at Glasgow, where the class discipline is strict, are kept too hard at work to have much leisure for declamation, and of William Lamb's presence at the university no trace or tradition can be found. It is probable that the intellectual atmosphere of the place suited him. There, at any rate, the existence of great problems in philosophy and morals was recognised, and young men were encouraged by the example of their teachers to endeavour to contribute some speculative mite towards a solution. The 'Scotch metaphysics' which George III. disliked, and which had no counterpart in the English universities, were the daily food for six months at a time of the ingenuous youth across the border, no small proportion of whom literally cultivated learning on a little oatmeal. A succession of distinguished men filled the logic and moral philosophy chairs of Glasgow

during the last century. In the earlier part Hutcheson led the way with his inquiry into the origin of our ideas and his disquisitions on the nature and conduct of the passions. Adam Smith, not yet absorbed in the great work of his life, followed with his 'Theory of the Moral Sentiments,' and when he retired Reid entered the lists against Berkeley and Hume. Reid remained an intellectual force to the last, and he had not long been dead when Lamb went to Glasgow. The traditions of these great teachers still rested as a spell upon the place, and it is possible that Professor Mylne's lectures may have helped to nourish those speculative tendencies and that dreamy fondness for casuistic discussions which characterised Lamb in after years.

It must be admitted that the reminiscences of his Glasgow life contained in 'Lord Melbourne's Papers' throw something like a wet-blanket over these conjectures, which may nevertheless be true. William did not go alone. He had his brother Frederick as a companion. They both resided with Professor Millar, and they kept up a brisk correspondence with their mother. Their letters are long and racy, and prove the footing of perfect comradeship on which they stood with her. Frederick sends her a description of their life in-doors. 'There is nothing heard of in this house but study, though there is as much idleness, drunkenness, &c., out of it, as in most universities. We breakfast at half-past nine, but I am roused by a stupid, slow, lumbering mathematician, who tumbles me out of bed at eight. During the whole of the day we are seldom out of the house or the lecture-rooms for more than an hour, and after supper, which finishes a little after eleven, the reading generally continues till near two. Saturday and Sunday are holidays, but on Monday we have examinations

in Millar's lectures. You may guess whether in this way many things are likely to happen. Millar himself is a little jolly dog, and the sharpest fellow I ever saw. All the ladies here are contaminated with an itch for philosophy and learning, and such a set of fools it never was my lot to see. One of the Miss Millars is pretty, but they are all philosophers, and the eldest is exactly like Mrs. Trimmer. William quotes poetry to them all day, but I don't think he has made any impression yet, and my conversation with them is very little. One of the fellows in the house is a Scotchman, a blustering, positive sort of fellow, but very good-humoured and with a good deal of knowledge. The other is an Irishman, who is very good-humoured with none, and as like Lord Duncannon as he can stand. So there is a sketch of the family.' A letter from William relates other incidents. 'Thanks for your account of Kinnaird (Byron's friend, Charles, eighth baron Kinnaird). Is he staying in town? I hope you will contrive this winter to rub off a few rum ideas which he contracted in these philosophical colleges, and to divest him of rather too minute and scrupulous a morality, which is entirely unfit for this age. I suppose they did this for him a little in Edinburgh last year, but, however, I daresay some work is still left for London. For the company and manners of this place I do not see much difference in them from the company and manners of any country town. I have dined out in a family-way at a wealthy merchant's, and we have had several parties at home. We drink healths at dinner, hand round the cake at tea, and put our spoons into our cups when we desire to have no more, exactly in the same manner that we used to behave at Hatfield, at Eton, and at Cambridge. Almost the only exclusive custom I have remarked is a

devilish good one, which ought to be adopted everywhere. After the dinner they hand round the table a bottle of whisky and another of brandy, and the whole company, male and female in general, indulge in a dram. This is very comfortable and very exhilarating, and affords an opportunity for many jokes. As to language, they talk infinitely better English here than at Newcastle, and are much more easily understood. The town is a damnable one, and the dirtiest I ever saw, and full of all the inconveniences that accompany manufactures. I have received the works of the Divine Plato and the Greek Grammar with great thankfulness, though Xenophon would be of more use to me.'

William Lamb writes to his mother on all sorts of topics, and in a style of great vivacity. He evidently pours out his soul to her without the least reserve. Novels, politics, the doings of Bonaparte, the course which Mr. Fox might pursue 'with the greatest propriety and dignity and utility,' all pass under review. 'Lunacy is the distemper which common fame seems always to give to our ministers (justly enough) when they keep themselves up. I remember they said so of Pitt a year ago. The time may not be very far off when they may be devilishly glad to be able to plead it.' At that time the politics of Melbourne House were Foxite. Referring to an anonymous preface from some English pen accompanying the publication of certain alleged original letters from the French army in Egypt, he writes: 'It is impossible to determine whether the preface is Canning's or Gifford's, or some one else of the same set, for the like hitch and catch of monotonous wit runs through them all, poets, secretaries, parsons and nobles, from the top to the bottom, from Frere to Boringdon. Whoever the

author may be signifies little. The only doubt is whether he be a more degraded fool, or a more infamous calumniator.' Lord Egremont has told Lady Melbourne of the disputatious character of some of the men who have been at Professor Millar's, a hint perhaps to Lamb. He thinks the impeachment likely to be true of the whole University: 'No place can be perfect, and the truth is that the Scotch universities are very much calculated to make a man vain, important, and pedantic. This is naturally the case where there is a great deal of reading. You cannot have the advantages of study and of the world together. The way is to let neither of them get too fast a hold of you.' He receives from Dr. Langford a 'Treatise on the Requisites for Confirmation, with a dissertation on the Sacrament,' and he tells his mother that he has written 'to praise it and thank him for it.' Some one, perhaps his mother, has sent him a copy of Robert Hall's sermon on 'Modern Infidelity,' and he subjects it to rather pungent criticism. Though it 'exactly hits Lewis's taste (Monk Lewis) both in argument and eloquence,' he confesses that it meets his in neither. What he 'particularly reprobates in the sermon, and which will be found in all writings of this nature, is the indiscriminate abuse of all who have thought against them. They take the faults and crimes of any one man, and apply them liberally to the whole sect.' 'However,' he says, 'read it through. I do not think you will find one argument of the absurdity of which I cannot, I will not say convince you, for that is a bold word, but of the validity of which I cannot make you doubt.' And then he adds: 'I do not like the Dissenters, and this Hall is one. They are more zealous and consequently more intolerant than the Established Church. Their only object is power. If we are to have a prevailing religion, let us have one that

is cool and indifferent and such a one as we have got.' Lady Melbourne seems to have been anxious to keep her favourite son right in matters of belief, but he had already formed habits of thought which made him impervious to sermons, at any rate if drawn from Dissenting quivers.

CHAPTER III

WAITING FOR THE TIDE

Education finished; what next?—Some disadvantages on setting out—Sauntering—Decides for the law—Is called to the bar with his future Lord Chancellor—Lamb and Pepys—Goes on circuit—Actually gets a brief—A twofold crisis—Falls in love—Becomes an eldest son—A courtship not without sinister auguries—A double marriage and some maternal dreams fulfilled.

WILLIAM LAMB had now crossed the threshold of manhood, and on a superficial view his position might seem to be in all respects enviable, but, looked at more closely, we shall perhaps have to admit that it was attended with some disadvantages. It is a mere matter of justice to record this fact. In after life his character was often made the subject of severe criticism, and it is therefore proper to take into account the circumstances which told upon its formation during those long years, one third of an average career, when responsibility is wholly borne or largely shared by others. His childhood and youth were spent in mere enjoyment, and enjoyment chiefly of the passive kind. Gambolling on the lawns at Brocket and Petworth appears to be the severest exercise in which he ever indulged. As he grew up he showed no fondness for those manly games which foster energy, quicken resolution, and train the will to habits of decision. It is to be feared that there was a large lack in

his home life of that moral discipline, something quite different from strictness or severity, which insensibly instils into the youthful mind a sense of duty and leads to the gradual discovery of obligations which have to be recognised and discharged if conduct is to spring from any deeper source than voluptuous caprice. There is no trace of evidence that he ever had set before him a higher ideal than one which was purely worldly, and blame must be mixed with much extenuation if we find that the twig grew as it was bent.

With the abilities he undoubtedly possessed, it would have been a good for him intellectually, and even with a view to success, if he had been born in different surroundings. Work, and the discipline attendant upon it, were needed to give point to his powers, and if he had been thrown from the outset upon his own exertions, he might have won distinction sooner than he did, and won it more obviously on his personal merits. It was his ill-fortune to be brought up in the midst of a lavish display of wealth. It did not mend matters that the display, as measured by the more sober tastes of the present day, was slightly vulgar in the forms it took. The object was to make a show, to produce an impression. It was an ill-regulated profuseness, suggesting that the mines of Golconda lay in the background close at hand, and that the flow could never be exhausted. It is true that William Lamb was only a younger son, and that, by a cherished usage upon which it would be sacrilege to innovate, the bulk of the patrimony of a great family passes to the first-born, but it would have been absurd to read out to him the dry lessons of prudence when princes of the blood were being feasted at his father's table. The mere overflow of this sumptuous expenditure would replenish a reservoir deep enough to wade and swim in.

When school and college days were over, there was no one to whom the young man could look for advice, no one belonging to him competent to give it, or with authority sufficient to make him feel that he stood in need of it. His father did not care for him, he was wrapped up in his eldest son, who resembled him, and whose tastes were the same as his own. He was a passive and almost silent member of the household at Whitehall, proud perhaps to be the host of the gay throng whom its mistress had the courage and the tact to gather round her, but acquiescent rather than delighted, and shut up at times, it would seem, to unpleasant reveries. 'What sacrifices,' says Mr. Torrens, 'her indolent and undemonstrative mate had silently to endure, by what regrets his hours of solitude were haunted, by what jealousies his dreams were troubled, who will ever know?' A father to whom such remarks will apply, even if they be a little overcharged, is a most important fact, if only on the negative side, in a son's history. William Lamb was left to his mother. She might do with him what she liked and what she could, so that the trouble taken went no further than herself. In one sense she worked bravely for him and for them all. She had already won an Irish peerage for her husband, and she hoped some day to make it a peerage of the United Kingdom. Her eldest son was to be valued as the next possessor. His future was supposed to be fixed, but there was ample room for solicitude and effort in the uncertain fortunes of his brother. He had, if possible, to be got into Parliament, though his chance as yet seemed rather remote. Peniston was already in possession of a seat, and the family estates, so heavily weighted in other ways, would hardly bear the cost of two. Much would depend upon the abilities he might in time develop, but if

the worst came to the worst, it would surely be possible so to arrange matters that some kind-hearted minister would some day feel obliged out of civility and gratitude to present him with a sinecure.

The new family had as yet no influential connections, and this was a serious defect at a period when family connection was a potent factor in politics. The title itself had no lustre, it was held to be one of those titles which had been given for votes, and the older peers, forgetting the comparative juvenility of their own patents, looked with some jealousy on peerages created for the mere convenience of the Crown. Old blood, or blood that had flowed through at least two or three coroneted generations, counted for much in the composition of a ministry and in the distribution of places. Umbrage was already being taken at the too frequent making of new peers. The House of Lords, it was felt, was growing too numerous, and the honour of a seat in it would soon be hardly worth having. Moreover, it rather told against the Melbournes that their recent honours were so ostentatiously paraded, and made the occasion for such desperate and successful attacks upon the patronage, and apparently the very intimate friendship, of the very highest personages in the realm. In some respects the Prince of Wales was cheap enough, and was every day making himself cheaper, but at any rate he was the heir to the throne, and it showed some audacity to seize upon every opportunity for creeping up the sleeve of the future King. It amounted almost to an attestation of character, betraying the absence of that fine ancestral pride which puts no excessive value upon the social pre-eminence of the Crown, and looks with disesteem upon any immoderate effort to cultivate its blandishments. This want of aristocratic

connections of a well established type was a difficulty to be overcome. To scale the barrier and settle down among the strawberry leaves and fair white lilies on the other side was the next task to be accomplished. We shall soon see that it was managed with tolerable success.

William Lamb was not left unprovided with the promptings of ambition, but they came from the outside and found but a faint echo within. Of course he wished to become a distinguished man ; to be an orator, a statesman, a minister, and a ruler of the realm. But it was a feeble wish, feeble partly perhaps because of diffidence springing from a half-suspicion of incapacity for any lofty flight, but still more because there was not in him much of the material, good or ill, of which ambitious minds are made. Still, as a filial duty, as the best recompense he could render to maternal solicitude, he did his best to be ambitious, and succeeded fairly well. But it is one thing to wish and another to achieve. Nothing is more treacherous and useless than vague ambitious dreams. The important point is the first step. One foot securely placed on the lowest rung of the ladder is better than any amount of gazing at the top. But it was this first step that Lamb hesitated to take, and knew not how to take. He wanted a guide through those next five or six years of his life, which would probably determine the remainder of it. Several paths were equally open, or, which came to the same thing, were equally shut. It is suggested that the Church occurred to him as offering a possible career. The idea was quite feasible. His susceptible and pliant mind would have taken kindly to theology, and good taste, if no higher influence were at hand, would perhaps have ensured the irreducible minimum of professional decorum. So far as intellectual qualifications are concerned,

and we are warned against going one step further, he would probably have made a better bishop than he made a statesman. It is said that Lord Egremont advised him not to think of the Church; the advice came from an odd quarter, but it was sound, though perhaps it was not required. William Lamb must have felt himself unfitted for either linen or lawn. He had, as we have seen, entered himself in the books of Lincoln's Inn during his second year at Cambridge, and while it is probable that he had not yet finally made up his mind, he looked forward to the bar as his destination in default of anything better.

In the meantime he spent four or five years in thorough idleness. It is not to be supposed that he did not attend lectures occasionally, or peep into the law courts to pick up hints with a remote eye to business, or neglect his dinners at Lincoln's Inn, or even that he did not read a good deal. There is abundant evidence that he was an omnivorous reader, and that he found real pleasure in reading. This must always be remembered as one of his saving qualities. But he did not engage in any course of systematic study. He did not set himself to acquire the knowledge requisite for the profession he had in view. He passed his time as a fine gentleman about town, looking into the clubs, sauntering along St. James's Street and Pall Mall, and spending his evenings convivially. He renewed his Eton acquaintance with Brummel, whom he saw almost every day, and they often dined together. It would be going too far to say that they were rivals in dress, for Brummel was admitted to be unapproachable, but Lamb knew the art of concealing art, and was not the less fastidious in his attire because it fell in with his humour to add to it the piquancy of an affected indifference. He was a man of fashion, and aspired to be

considered a man of the world. He stood well with the guests who met under his father's roof. Lord Minto describes him as 'a remarkably pleasant, clever, and well-informed young man.' He was often invited to Carlton House. The moral atmosphere of the place was not invigorating, but it was a distinction to go there, and the invitation was a requital of hospitality. Mr. Torrens tells an incident which he says Lamb used often to relate. On the night of Hatfield's attempt to assassinate the King at Drury Lane, the Prince was dining at Melbourne House. When the news came, Lady Melbourne instantly ordered her carriage, and entreated the Prince to lose not a moment in going to the theatre to congratulate the King on his escape. The Prince, who was then on bad terms with his father, made excuses, but at last yielded and went, asking Lamb to go with him. They presented themselves at the royal box, and a filial duty was discharged, thanks to Lady Melbourne. The Prince could hardly have been in closer relations with Melbourne House; the mother his hostess, the father one of his gentlemen-in-waiting, and their son his 'equerry for an hour.'

At length this gay interval was coming for the time to an end. In 1804 Lamb was called to the bar, and in good company, one of his companions being Mr. Pepys, whom thirty years later he was to advance to the Woolsack. The careers of these two men, who met casually on one occasion, and hardly saw each other again till one of them made the other Lord Chancellor, present a striking contrast. A vigorous outline of Pepys's career is given by Sir Denis Le Marchant in his 'Life of Lord Althorp.' He was the second of three sons of Sir William Pepys, Master in Chancery, and one of the Boswellian circle. Their father educated

them at home before sending them to Harrow, 'instructing them himself, reading with them, and sparing no efforts to give them the accomplishments in which it had been the great object of his life to excel.' He succeeded with the eldest and the youngest, but he could make but little of the second boy. He was a sturdy, thick-set fellow, cold in manners, blunt in speech, aiming at no distinction, and in every way ill-repaying his father's culture. He did not show one spark of genius. 'His dark searching eyes, massive forehead, and expressive lips,' combined with 'an air of independence and determination,' alone indicated the stuff of which he was made. At Lincoln's Inn he gave himself up to hard work. He studied and mastered everything that bore on his profession, concentrating the whole force of his will and intellect on this one aim. At the bar he rose slowly, then fast. In course of time, but not too soon, he entered Parliament, became Solicitor-General, then Master of the Rolls, and finally, under circumstances which we will not anticipate, accepted the Lord Chancellorship at the hands of his call-day companion. Both succeeded, it need not be said in what different ways, and it would be invidious to point the contrast too rigorously.

The ice being broken, Lamb took the plunge and set forth in quest of clients. He chose the Northern circuit, and made his first appearance in wig and gown at the Lancashire sessions. There was a very good reason for his selecting the common law side of jurisprudence. He had not been a diligent student. His stock of legal lore was limited, and he took that branch of the profession in which it could be made to go furthest. A novice may easily imagine that it requires but little knowledge of law to argue most of the cases that are brought before a criminal court.

No very refined technicalities are likely to arise in a trial for murder or burglary. The great thing, it would seem, is to master the facts, to be able to make the most of every point which tells in favour of your client, and to present the whole in such a way as shall be likely to tell upon the jury. A good voice, a knowledge of human nature, some dexterity in argument, and a fair command of language have been held to be the essentials of success, and some famous instances could be adduced in support of the theory. Lamb might well flatter himself that he possessed all these, and that with such experience as could be picked up in practice, he might be able to make a respectable figure. It may be recorded for the encouragement of nascent forensic genius that he did not wholly fail. He got a guinea brief, his first and only one. It is said that he was indebted for it to Mr. Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, who suggested to a Salford solicitor that he should bestow this mark of confidence upon the coming man. Mr. Scarlett had met Lamb in London, knew all about him, and may well have been as favourably impressed with his talents as others were. Forensic advocacy was perhaps the line in which Lamb might fairly hope to excel. The chief danger was that the point and sparkle of his conversation would disappear when he came to face a jury. It was an odd choice that took him down to Lancashire, where he was unknown, and where the dialect, which could not be excluded from the witness box, must have been almost unintelligible to a fine gentleman who had never strayed far from Pall Mall. The Home circuit would have seemed preferable. Perhaps the experiment was not meant to be made in serious earnest, and he may have thought that as a breakdown was possible, the further it was made from home

the better. How it would have finally fared with the common-law crusader the world will never know. At this time two events happened which fixed him permanently in London, and decided his career.

The first of these events was that he had fallen in love. Considering the social influences to which he had been exposed, it speaks well for him that he was not invulnerable to the charms of an honest attachment. Probably he became entangled in the meshes before he was aware, but this would only be another proof in his favour, since it would show that his heart was unsophisticated by the ways of the world, and lay freely open to nature. It is certain that his feelings were engaged before prudence would have counselled or sanctioned matrimony, but here he had a safeguard in others who would not fail to make his retreat easy. The lady who was to share and, as the event proved, to sadly chequer his life, was Caroline Ponsonby, daughter of the third Earl of Bessborough. Her mother was daughter of the first Earl Spencer, another of whose daughters, Georgiana, was married to the fifth Duke of Devonshire, and has been known ever since as the 'beautiful Duchess.' Lord Bessborough had a house at Roehampton, and it was there that Lamb met Lady Caroline. She was then nineteen years of age, had the charm of sprightliness derived from an extreme naturalness of manners, and was of a character in some respects unique. In her letters to Lady Morgan, at a later period one of her most intimate friends, Lady Caroline gives a vivid portraiture of what she was, or imagined herself to have been, in her youthful years. It should, however, be borne in mind that these recollections were written down in the light of a rather fitful memory, and were probably exaggerated. Some years of her child-

hood were spent in Italy, where her mother was residing on account of infirm health. On returning from Italy, she went to live with her aunt, the Duchess of Devonshire. 'Her account,' says Mr. Torrens, 'of life in the nursery is curious. The children saw little of their parents; were served on silver in the morning, and allowed to carry their plates to the kitchen in quest of the dainties they longed for. Their ignorance was profound. They imagined that all people were either nobles or paupers, and that for the rich there was no end of money.' It would appear that the pictures given us of the old French *noblesse* before the Revolution had a pretty exact counterpart at home. 'We had no idea,' writes Lady Caroline, 'that bread or butter was made; how it came we did not pause to think, but had no doubt that fine horses must be fed on beef. At ten years old I could not write. My cousin Hartington loved me better than himself, and every one paid me compliments shown to children likely to die. I wrote not, spelt not, but made verses which they all thought beautiful. For myself I preferred washing a dog, or polishing a piece of Derbyshire spar, or breaking in a horse if they would let me.'

When ten years old Lady Caroline was transferred to the care of her maternal grandmother, wife of the first Earl Spencer. Lord Althorp, in the fragment of autobiography prefixed to his memoirs, gives no very agreeable impression of this lady, to whom he stood in the same relation. He describes her as a woman who 'did not possess naturally any quickness of understanding' nor sterling good sense, but 'she had taken great pains with herself, had read a great deal, and, though far from brilliant in conversation, had lived in the society of clever people. This gave her a

reputation for ability to which she was not entitled.' Sir Denis Le Marchant prints from a manuscript letter of Mrs. Delany's an amusing accouut of Lady Spencer's marriage. She was the daughter of Mr. Poyntz, sometime minister plenipotentiary in Sweden, and an attachment had sprung up between her and Mr. Spencer, the future first Earl, who was then a minor. A large party assembled at Althorp to celebrate his coming of age, among whom were Mr. Poyntz and his daughter. When the day came Mr. Spencer told Mr. Poyntz that he had determined to make Miss Poyntz his wife as soon as he was master of himself, and begged that they might be married the next day. His request was granted, and though fifty people were in the house, none knew anything of the matter except Lord and Lady Cowper, Mrs. Poyntz, and her eldest son. Accordingly, after tea the parties necessary to the wedding stole away from the company to Lady Cowper's dressing-room, where the ceremony was performed, and then rejoined the dancing. 'After supper everybody retired as usual to their different apartments. Miss Poyntz and her sister lay from their first going to Althorp in the best apartments, and Miss Louisa resigned her place on this occasion.' Her bridal outfit lost nothing in splendour by being post-nuptial. The dress in which she went to court was of the most sumptuous description, and her diamonds were worth 12,000*l.* It should be added as some counterpoise to the disparaging remarks of her grandson, that competent judges, one of whom was David Garrick, spoke in glowing terms of her conversational powers, and that the years of her widowhood were employed in works of benevolence. She was, says Sir Denis Le Marchant, one of the first among the higher classes to take an interest in Sunday schools. The philan-

thropic Mrs. Trimmer, to whom we have seen Lamb comparing one of the Glasgow Miss Millars, was her frequent guest and a most attached friend.

Such was the relative with whom Lady Caroline Ponsonby chiefly lived after reaching the age of ten. The romantic marriage just described may perhaps suggest the idea of reversionary types of character. The scene in Lady Cowper's dressing-room at Althorp has its counterpart in much that afterwards happened at Brocket and Melbourne House. In spite of the disadvantages of her early training Lady Caroline became the mistress of many accomplishments. She acquired French and Italian, ventured even upon Greek and Latin, and had the further courage, Mr. Torrens tells us, to undertake the recital of an ode of Sappho. She could draw and paint, and had the instinct of caricature. Her mind was brimming with romance, and regardless of conventionality she followed her own tastes in everything. In conversation she had the vivacity and grace which Garrick admired in her grandmother, and where such qualities were present there must have been something like wit. It is not surprising that William Lamb should have found himself the slave of her attractions, or should have felt the bondage too delightful to have any desire to escape from it. Nor is it more surprising that the lady should have been drawn to William Lamb, and met him, as it almost seems she did, half way. Their natures were sympathetic. Quick susceptibility was the characteristic of both. It is enough to look at his portrait to know that he was handsome. There is, moreover, a suppressed glow in the features which tells of passion beneath. They were perhaps too much alike for happiness. The complimentary elements were wanting on both sides. A kind, good,

matter-of-fact woman, with plenty of common sense and a sturdy understanding, would have suited him better. He had too much romance of his own and needed no accession to the stock. The meeting of two such aerial forms in the summer sky might mean lightning and thunder some day. Happily, or unhappily, the future was hidden from their view and it was enough to taste the blessedness of the hour. Their mutual preference took no account for the present of matrimony. There were obstacles in the way which others would see if they did not. Lamb was a younger son and had no means for setting up an adequate establishment. His immediate business was to contrive some way of keeping himself, and his guinea brief at Salford, though gratifying as his first retainer, fell rather short of a full assurance of fortune.

At this moment that other event happened which helped to determine his career. His elder brother died, and his prospects changed at once. He was no longer a younger son, but heir to the title and estates, with the duty of maintaining the position and reputation of the family. His father was inconsolable. The clever bright youth who would now succeed could be no adequate substitute with him for the son he had lost. He seems to have acted unreasonably. He was intractable on the question of an allowance. His son Peniston had had 5,000*l.* a year, but for his son William, who stepped into the vacant place and had the same claims, he would only go as far as 2,000*l.* Judges of aristocratic economics will be able to determine how far this sum fell below the proper standard. It would be fair perhaps to say that Lord Melbourne best knew his own business, and that he may have been influenced by reasons which had nothing to do with paternal affection.

It was one thing to reduce an allowance which had been long enjoyed, and another to fix upon the sum which should be given where there was still entire freedom to arrange the scale of future expenditure. There had been thirty years of lavish disbursement at Melbourne House, and the million with which the start was made, though large, was not an exhaustless treasure. At any rate, with the diminished allowance Lamb had to be content. He was sure of free quarters while his mother lived. The Melbourne family had several mansions, and one of them could always be spared for him. He was now free to think more seriously of Lady Caroline. If not rich at present, he had expectations which might well be held to make up the deficiency. He was not about to marry a woman with an enormous dower, but she would bring with her riches of another kind, a connection with some of the greatest and noblest families in the land.

So matters were soon arranged, and Lamb was married to Lady Caroline Ponsonby. On the same day another marriage took place which must have been infinitely agreeable to Lady Melbourne. Emily, the daughter of the house, bestowed her hand upon Earl Cowper, one of the richest landowners in Hertfordshire, and a near neighbour at Brocket. The earldom was not of ancient date, but it was at any rate a century old, and had lately gathered around it more imposing ancestral honours. As the sole representative of the Princes and Counts of Nassau d'Auverquerque, his father had been created a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and had obtained permission of George III. to accept the title. The marriage to which he owed this elevation also connected him by descent with the ancient house of Butler, and added an Irish and a Scotch barony to his other distinctions. These honours descended

to his son, who now became the son-in-law of Lady Melbourne. The heroine who had fought in the van of the family fortunes for more than thirty years had at last realised some of her ambitious dreams. The sumptuous hospitalities of Melbourne House and the million which penurious placemen and lawyers and bishops had slowly heaped together, had not been lavished wholly in vain.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL LAND-SURVEYING

William Lamb in Parliament—The men he found there—Pitt and Fox—Family connections—Lord Althorp—William Huskisson—Quick fate of 'All the Talents'—Lamb moves the Address—A Constitutional question raised—Lamb stands by the Constitution—Veers towards administrative Radicalism—The Duke of York scandal—The Regency—The 'rising sun' will surely shine upon us—Not at all: has no predilections—Lamb loses his seat and is adrift.

LAMB entered Parliament in 1805 as member for Leominster. His election being simply a commercial transaction, needing only a cheque upon his father's bankers, he did not take the trouble to present himself to his constituents, who having the grace of their condition were willing enough to take him on trust. While he and his bride were spending their honeymoon at Brocket, great events were happening. The army which had been threatening our shores with invasion was on its victorious march to Ulm and Vienna. It was the year of Trafalgar and Austerlitz; it was also the last of Pitt's career. The statesman who had grasped the helm a second time did not weather the storm which his policy helped to create. His death on the 23rd of the following January brought with it a notable change in the position of English parties, and soon after Lamb took his seat in the House his political friends were in power.

What his political principles were at this time, or whether

he had any, it would hardly repay us to inquire. His politics for some years to come must not be taken too seriously. He had been bred up in admiration of Mr. Fox, who was still a frequent guest at Melbourne House, and the social element had so far been a dominating force in the formation of his opinions. The influence of Carlton House was on the same side. The Prince of Wales was at variance with the King, the Whigs were opposed to the policy of the Court, and common enmities were supposed to bind them together. From its very nature the tie was not strong enough to last long, and the expectations it seemed to justify were doomed to be disappointed, but for the present the Whigs consoled themselves with the belief that the future had blessings in store for them, and they made the most of the beams of the rising sun.

In the meantime, whatever the future might bring with it, the King had been forced to stifle a long-cherished resentment and to admit Mr. Fox to his counsels. For twenty years he had kept him at arm's length. Again and again he had vowed never more to have anything to do with a man whom he regarded as a Jacobin and a profligate, the two names comprising the sum of all wickedness. The King's estimate of moral obliquity in any particular case was not altogether unaffected by the politics of the sinner, and Fox had done nothing to induce any voluntary blindness to his defects. But the death of Pitt left the King in a quandary. The one strong man was gone, and no other member of the Government had any pretension to take his place. There were fairly strong men outside, and it was necessary to call them in, if only to inspire the nation with some confidence in its rulers. The King would have been glad to take Lord Grenville and Mr. Grey and one or two

more without Fox, but they refused to leave him outside, and the King had to take them all. Fox's interview in the royal closet on accepting his appointment would have been a scene for a painter. 'Mr. Fox,' said the King, 'I little thought that you and I should ever meet again in this place, but I have no desire to look back upon old grievances, and you may rest assured I never shall remind you of them.' 'My deeds, and not my words,' rejoined Mr. Fox, 'shall commend me to your Majesty.' This was in February; in September he followed his rival to the grave. He lived long enough to clear his conscience as Foreign Minister, charged with the conduct of a war which he had condemned, by opening negotiations with Bonaparte, in a despairing hope that they might lead to a peaceful result. When they failed his colleagues found their way clear; they could carry on the struggle without inconsistency.

This is not a time at which one would choose to introduce into the memoirs of a man who left us nearly fifty years ago, any allusion to what is now known as the Irish question. But it must be remembered that we are standing close to the period at which that question in its modern form first arose, that is, within six years after the passing of the Act of Union. It is a fact which cannot be dispensed with. The Irish question will be found running like a dark thread through the whole history of successive administrations from then till now. The events we shall have to record as those in which Lamb took an increasingly active part, will be unintelligible unless we recognise this guiding clue and keep it always in sight. The chief point to be borne in mind is that, in the view of Pitt, Catholic Emancipation was the necessary complement of the Act of Union. It was the consideration for which the Catholics of Ireland

had given at any rate some partial assent to that important measure, and to refuse to pay down the stipulated price after the bargain was completed amounted to a flagrant and fatal breach of faith. Pitt resigned in 1801 on the King's refusal to sanction the introduction of a Bill dealing with the Catholic claims. He threw up his post at a critical moment in the midst of a great war, so imperative did he feel to be the obligations he had incurred. Unfortunately he agreed to waive them three years later when he resumed office, and on his death this waiver, at least in part, was accepted as a legacy by his successors. Their determination not to accept it fully was the rock on which they foundered after only a twelvemonth's voyage.

These successors of Pitt were the famous ministry known by the nickname of All the Talents. At its head was Lord Grenville, whom at a time when obscure celebrities are apt to be forgotten it may be useful to identify as the nephew of Hester Grenville, wife of the great Earl of Chatham, and brother of the Marquis of Buckingham, whose grandson, the Duke of the same name, fell into the hands of his creditors some forty years ago. Fox, as has been said, was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lord Henry Petty, afterwards known to us as Lord Lansdowne, was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Henry Erskine, the intrepid defender of Hardy and Horne Tooke, Lord Chancellor, Mr. Gray, presently to become Lord Howick and then Earl Grey, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Lord Spencer, father of Lord Althorp, at the Home Office. Sheridan must not be forgotten. He was Treasurer of the Navy, and probably found in his department, though hardly fit for the drama, another 'School for Scandal.' Among them also was Lord Sidmouth, who, as Mr. Addington, filled up the short interregnum between

Pitt's two administrations, the uncompromising Tory of the 'Peterloo' days, and the author of the Six Acts, whose fame or infamy still endures. It was a brilliant turn-out. The 'Talents' were all there. Several of the men who were to play a leading part in the politics of a later day then took their seats in the saddle. To the country it was a rather strange spectacle, and the satires and squibs t called forth, as they lingered on provincial book-shelves, may have been met with in their earlier days by persons still living. But the ministry carried within itself the sentence of dissolution. It fell as suddenly as it arose, and it had the ill-fortune to leave behind it a name which has barely escaped being held ridiculous.

These are the statesmen and politicians whom William Lamb soon found on the right hand of the Speaker on entering the House of Commons. He would have taken his seat among them or behind them on whichever side they happened to sit, but he doubtless did so with all the greater pleasure, because in following his own inclinations, or rather in obeying the natural law of his political existence, he was placed not far from the Treasury Bench. He was in the midst of friends, many of them his immediate connections. Mr. Grey had married a Ponsonby, one of his wife's relatives; Mr. G. Ponsonby, another relative, and brother-in-law to Mr. Grey, was Chancellor of Ireland; Earl Spencer was her uncle; Mr. Fox, the leader of the House, had known him from a child, had snatched his college oration from oblivion, and had just introduced him at Brooks's, the social gathering-place of the Whig party Other relationships are discoverable were it worth while to search them out. 'The Whigs,' Lamb himself once said, with the usual decorative epithet, 'are all cousins.' It was

true not of the Whigs only, though in them perhaps the clannish instinct was most strongly developed. Family connection played a great part in every political combination. Blood was thicker than water, and they helped each other on. Hence it had happened that for more than a century the government of the country was the appanage of a few great families, and a change of administration generally meant little more than the transfer of power from one set of cousins to another. At his first start in politics Lamb had the full advantage of this arrangement. There were persons who took some interest in looking after him. But for this circumstance perhaps he would have sunk beneath the seething waters, and been heard of no more.

There are one or two men whose political fortunes were afterwards closely linked with his own, and who entered with him now for the first time into public life, of whom a few words should be said. Among them the first place is due to Lord Althorp. He entered Parliament the year before Lamb as member for Okehampton, and on his father's appointment to the Home Office in the ministry of All the Talents, he was made by way of compliment a junior Lord of the Treasury. It was an honour for which he rendered no thanks. He abhorred public life; his tastes lay in the fields with his horses and hounds; but he took up with a parliamentary career as a duty which he had to discharge, and we have since known how well he discharged it. Earl Spencer was one of the old Whigs who went off with Mr. Burke and became a Tory. He bred up his son in his new opinions. When Lord Althorp went to Harrow his mother cautioned him to have nothing to do with the Whigs; but, without intending it, he disregarded her advice, and became very intimate with those who came

in his way, finding them the pleasantest companions. The truth is he was a born Liberal. His strong and manly nature could brook no exclusiveness, and ranged him always on the side of progress. His talents were not of a high order, but he could work hard when he liked, and when he did he succeeded. To please his mother he toiled during his second year at college and came out first in the examinations, but the extraordinary virtue thus displayed demanded some recompense. The last year he almost lived on the race-course, accumulating debts to the amount of some thousands, which his father had to borrow money to pay off. He had an almost reverent respect for the distinguished pugilists of his day. He kept a record of every shot he fired and of every race he ran with the hounds, including the most minute particulars, thus forming in the course of years a considerable library of quartos, which are religiously preserved at Althorp House. One would have said that these were not very promising beginnings for a legislator. It might have been difficult to see in them the earnest of a future leader of the House of Commons who could have had the premiership if he would have taken it. But he had within him a pearl of great price. He had a conscience which no sophistry could spoil, an honesty which was proof against all temptation, and a sturdy independence which scorned whatever might seem intended to turn him from the straight path. He became the ruler of his party and the most trusted of politicians by no other force than the force of character, the noblest triumph perhaps that a man can win.

William Huskisson was another of Lamb's personal connections with whom we should become at once acquainted. He is best known now for the tariff reforms

which were carried out seventeen years later when he became President of the Board of Trade; but he had already acquired much administrative experience. His political career was an afterthought, and the success he achieved in it was due exclusively to his personal talents. He was born at Birch Moreton, Worcestershire, in 1770, and was therefore Lamb's senior by nine years. Part of his early education was received in Paris, whither he went some years later to study medicine. As a student he took a lively interest in the earlier scenes of the French Revolution, and was present at the capture of the Bastile. Lord Gower was then our ambassador in Paris. Happening to meet with Huskisson he was impressed by his talents, and prevailed upon him to become his private secretary. The knowledge he acquired in this capacity led to his being employed on his return to London in superintending the enforcement of the Alien Act, and the diligence he displayed made way for further promotion. At the age of twenty-six he became Under Secretary for War and the Colonies, and in Pitt's second administration he held the office of Secretary for the Treasury. Between him and Pitt there was entire sympathy on questions of trade, as there was then and in after years between him and Canning. He was soon regarded as an indispensable man in matters of finance, and his superior knowledge made him a thorn in the side of the ministry of All the Talents. The financial measures of the new ministry laid them open to criticism, and Huskisson took advantage of the opportunity. His marriage in 1799 with the daughter of Admiral Milbanke, Lady Melbourne's uncle, brought him often to Melbourne House. His wide knowledge and the practical bent of his mind would have made him an admirable guide for Lamb, but he lacked

the touch of saving grace. He was not versed in the ways of society, and he had awkward manners. He could even blush and get embarrassed in fine company. His reputation outshone this cloud when he became a Cabinet minister. The diamond in the rough was then admitted to be a diamond after all.

On the death of Mr. Fox, Mr. Grey, now Lord Howick, became Foreign Minister and leader of the House. It was natural that he should put forward his young relative to move the address in reply to the speech from the throne. The speech which Lamb delivered on that occasion has not been preserved beyond a few lines. He remarked in this maiden effort that we had but two allies left in Europe; nevertheless he hoped and believed that the spirit of the country would not repine at the burdens and sacrifices that would be necessary to maintain our attitude of national resistance. The internal condition of the realm was, he said, prosperous and tranquil; all classes were contented, and our commerce flourishing. This might be described as drawing the long bow, but such liberties are permitted to a new member on moving the address. He had the honour to be followed by Mr. Canning, who moved as an amendment a counter-address, rivalling the ministerial one in professions of loyalty and devotion, but intimating that recent successes had been won 'notwithstanding the apparent inactivity of ministers.' It was a mere show of fighting, the Opposition did not care to go to a division, and the amendment was withdrawn.

A more serious question soon came to the front. Though Catholic Emancipation was a forbidden thing, not even to be mentioned in the King's presence, ministers felt that they owed something to the Catholics as well as to

their own principles. Accordingly they brought in a Bill enabling His Majesty to grant commissions in the army to dissenters from the Established Church. Lord Howick, who had charge of the measure, explained it to the King before producing it to the House, and obtained his provisional assent. But there were traitors in the Cabinet, there were whisperings and intrigues, the King's conscience became alarmed, and he told his ministers that the Bill must be dropped, alleging that he had not fully understood the extent of its proposed concessions. The Cabinet showed the white feather, and agreed to withdraw the Bill. But they had deceived themselves as to his Majesty's wishes. He wanted to get rid of them as well as of the Bill, and for that purpose he imposed upon them a further test. He required from them a written and positive engagement never under any circumstances to propose in the closet any measure of concession to the Catholics, or anything even connected with the Catholic question. This was more than could be endured, but perhaps not more than they deserved. They had forgotten what was due to themselves as ministers of the Crown, and retribution quickly followed. They were obliged to resign. 'All the Talents' melted into thin air, and the opposition took their places, with the Duke of Portland as Prime Minister.

A serious constitutional question was now raised which afforded Lamb an opportunity for wielding the controversial weapons that had been so industriously burnished up in the Debating Club of Glasgow University. The post of honour fell to Mr. Brand, who moved that 'it is contrary to the first duty of the confidential servants of the Crown to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering the King any advice which the course of

circumstances may render necessary for the welfare and service of the empire.' Lamb seconded the motion in a speech of which one solid fragment is preserved. Its solidity is apparent in the two opening sentences. 'The constitution of this realm,' he said, 'required that the King in exercising the functions of government should take the advice of the two great councils of the nation—the Houses of Lords and Commons. But the slow progress as well as the publicity of their deliberations would in many instances destroy that secrecy and interfere with that promptitude and despatch so often necessary to the success of the measures of the government.' This extract will suffice. We see whither our orator is tending. From this point it is easy to jump to the end of the argument, after first demurring perhaps to the statement about 'two great councils of the nation.' The resolution was in fact slightly irrelevant. It might be unconstitutional for ministers to give such a pledge, but they had not given it. The King had required it, and the question which really arose was whether the King could constitutionally make such a demand—a question which it was hardly constitutional to discuss. Mr. Canning saw this and founded his speech upon it, winding up by saying that 'even if His Majesty should be condemned at the bar of that House, it was still some consolation that from that sentence an appeal lay to the people, which under certain circumstances he should deem it his duty to make.' There was no need for such an appeal. The motion was rejected by 258 votes to 226. Lamb remarks in his diary upon the extraordinary change which had occurred since the Easter recess. Before it, when the new ministers were in opposition, they could rarely muster more than sixty or seventy votes, whereas now that they were installed in

power they could command a majority of thirty-two in a large House. There had been no appeal to the country in the meantime—members had merely changed sides. The influence of the Crown explained the process.

Though the discarded ministers had been so soundly beaten, the question was not allowed to drop, and it may be worth while referring to the views Lamb held on one collateral point which had been raised. He cannot yet be accepted as a constitutional authority, though it is probable that his opinions were better than his rhetoric, but he was in close communication with some of the ablest men of the party, and may be supposed to have known what was then regarded as orthodox Whig doctrine. He mentions in his diary that Mr. Bathurst Bragge, Lord Sidmouth's brother-in-law, in the course of the discussion in the House, broached a doctrine which he believed to have been 'unheard of before that day,' namely, that the King may act constitutionally without any advisers, and that there are certain occasions, such as the interval between the dismissal of one set of ministers and the appointment of another, in which he must so act. Lamb's comment is, 'If this be admitted it leads either to the absurdity that in a free government there may be acts of the executive power for which no one is responsible, or to the unconstitutional conclusion that the King is amenable,' and he denounces the doctrine as 'completely subversive of the very foundations of our government.' In a speech on a motion made by Mr. Lyttelton, the Master of the Rolls waived, says Lamb, the question whether the King can act without responsible advisers, and no further satisfaction appears to have been furnished by the debates in either House, but Sir Erskine May suggests the sort of bridge that can be

made to span the yawning chasm. By no known process can a sovereign be prevented from coming to any decision he thinks fit, but it is of no avail unless it is carried into effect, and ministers become themselves responsible for the acts which brought them into power.

So long as his friends were in office Lamb's course was plain. He voted with them on all occasions. Nor had he any reason to complain of the treatment he received. They put him well to the front, he had an opportunity of showing what was in him, and he was probably not without hopes of being able before long to plant his foot on one of the lower rungs of the administrative ladder. When the Tories came in with the Duke of Portland his point of view was shifted a little. Fresh influences came into play. He could consider his own position more freely, and perhaps with less illusion. Lord Howick had gone to the House of Lords as Earl Grey, and Mr. Ponsonby, Lady Caroline's kinsman, had taken his place as leader of the Opposition. Canning was now at the Foreign Office, and Lamb was powerfully impressed by Canning's eloquence. Lord Palmerston now appeared on the Government bench for the first time. He was Lamb's junior by five years, yet he had no sooner obtained a seat in the House than he was made a Lord of the Admiralty. As soon as the Whigs were out of office the usual process of disintegration began. A Radical wing was forming, led by Whitbread, and including Lord Althorp, Lord Folkestone, better known as Lord Radnor, and Lord Milton, afterwards Earl FitzWilliam. These were men to kindle sympathies even in a nature at that time so loftily aristocratic as Lamb's. He could well afford to move on with old titles and broad acres. At any rate the existence of a second party on the Liberal side

placed an alternative at the disposal of a political aspirant. Lord Althorp was Lamb's relative by marriage, and this would help to bring them together. It is, moreover, a lesson taught afresh with every Parliamentary generation, that nothing so much enhances the value of a rising politician with the chiefs of his party as a prudent display of independence. Lamb was innocent of any in ention to sunder himself from the strictly orthodox connection, but for several years to come he swerved a little towards the left.

In 1809 there arose the famous scandal concerning the Duke of York. One day a Colonel Wardle got up from the ministerial side of the House and gave notice of motion for an inquiry into the official conduct of the Commander-in-Chief, whom he accused of selling commissions in the army through his mistress, Mrs. Clarke. The leaders of both parties were scandalised and incredulous. Very little was known of the Duke's accuser, and that little was not to his advantage. The Duke gave private assurances to Mr. Perceval, now at the head of affairs and leader of the House, that there was not the slightest foundation for the charge, and having thus, as he thought, sure ground to go upon, the minister thought it the best course to challenge investigation. But the tables were turned when the lady appeared at the bar as a witness. Her good looks and piquant manners exercised a certain fascination upon the House. To listen to her cross-examination was more exciting than a play. By some means or other, probably through her mother's second marriage to a compositor, she had received a fair education. She herself had married a stone-mason with whom her previous relations had not been exemplary. Captain Gronow tells us in his 'Reminiscences'

that the Duke made her acquaintance while walking across Blackheath, and that he took her to the royal box at the theatre, where she found from the way the people stared at her, and the remarks which reached her ears, that she was supposed to be the Duchess of York. The fashionable world of London soon discovered that a great lady kept house at Gloucester Place, and lived in a style which a royal revenue could hardly maintain. Her relations with the Duke were notorious, and it was presently ascertained that to propitiate her favour was a sure way of obtaining commissions and promotions at the Horse Guards. There was one straight road to her good graces. Her extravagance would have beggared her royal lover if he had been as munificent as his promises, but they probably both alike found that patronage was as good as money. With whatever pretences the process was concealed, he found, in point of fact, that to act upon her recommendations was a cheap way of indulging in a disgraceful amour.

There could be no doubt that Mrs. Clarke had been in the habit of doing all that was alleged. She obtained commissions from the Duke, and received large sums of money from the persons in whose names they were made out. For some considerable time she acted as patronage-purveyor for the army. Whether the Duke was fully acquainted with the character of these transactions is a point which could not be clearly proved. It was shown by his love-letters that she had been allowed to talk to him on the claims and requests of officers, but that he knew she took money and applied it to the maintenance of their joint establishment did not appear except from her evidence. It came out that her good offices were not restricted to the army. A Rev. Mr. O'Meara had secured her approbation,

and she prevailed upon the Duke to recommend him to the King as one of the court preachers. The Duke's best defence was the weakness of his understanding. He had the reputation of being the least intelligent of the King's sons, and this was a large admission. Though open to reproach on the score of morals, he had a certain reputation for piety. It was understood on his own assurance that he never travelled without having a Bible in the carriage.

What side he should take in the Parliamentary controversy was a rather delicate question for Lamb. The Duke had always been a favourite guest at Melbourne House. He was one of his mother's friends. There was once between them that charming harmony of discontent which made each prefer the house of the other, and led to an exchange. If Lamb had sought an excuse for taking the Duke's side, he might have found one, but he went with morality. The Government resolution exonerating the Duke from the charge of personal corruption was carried by a large majority, but under circumstances which detracted so much from its moral weight, that he immediately resigned the office of commander-in-chief. But this was not allowed to settle the question. Lord Althorp, breaking away from the chief of his party, came to the front with a resolution and a maiden speech. His object was to emphasise the Duke's resignation as an act which had been forced upon him. He accordingly moved that as the Duke had resigned the command of the army, the House did not 'now' think it necessary to proceed any farther in the consideration of the evidence before the committee. One sentence from Lord Althorp's speech deserves to be singled out, since it struck for the first time a chord which still has its vibrations. Speaking of the Duke he said, 'He was rather disposed to think that such high

rank and affinity to the throne were not the most recommendatory qualifications for the most responsible situation under the Crown,' and 'it appeared to him to be of the greatest importance that for the future no person should be called to such high situations but such as could be completely responsible.' The battle was fought over the word 'now' which contained the sting, and the Government carried its omission by an overwhelming majority. Lamb was among those who voted for its retention.

This swerve in a Radical direction went much further on Lord Folkestone's motion for a committee of inquiry into the existence of any corrupt practices in the disposal of offices in any department of the State. The shameful disclosures which had been made, added to those which had come to light a few years before in connection with Lord Melville's administration of the navy, afforded ample justification for such an inquiry, but there was not enough virtue in either party to sanction a general assault on the citadel of corruption. The young campaigners knew this so well that they did not seek the advice of the Whig leaders before bringing on their motion. They drew their inspiration from Mr. Whitbread, who planned the enterprise, and their utmost hope was that they might shame their chiefs into such a display of public spirit as the occasion demanded. They were bitterly disappointed. They had no sooner stated their case than the Whigs rode down upon them in a body. Lord Althorp in a letter to his father mentions Lamb as one of the 'very small minority' who voted for the motion. He made out thirty-one in the lobby, and there was one whose face he did not know. The breach thus made between the official Whigs and the more advanced

members of the party lasted long. It amounted to a Radical secession.

The following year we find Lamb speaking in support of a motion to abolish sinecures, assigning as one reason for their abolition that besides providing Government with venal support, they furnish a motive for factious opposition, 'since those who vote and are numbered in the day of battle, have reason to complain if they happen to be overlooked in the distribution of the spoil.'

We are now approaching one of his great displays, and it must be introduced with due ceremony. He had to show what constitutional eloquence could do on an important constitutional question. But the occasion was a mournful one. In 1810 the King began to show more decided symptoms of that distressing malady from which he was never to recover. It was the jubilee year of his reign. His youngest child, Amelia, to whom he was tenderly attached, lay dying. During fitful gleams of sanity, he used to summon the physicians to his room to ascertain from them by minute inquiries how she was going on. She was twenty-seven years of age. It is said that on one of his visits to her bedside she had a secret attachment to reveal, and that the disclosure helped still further to unhinge his mind. One incident is beyond all doubt. The princess had a ring made with a lock of her hair, and as she placed it on her father's finger she said to him, 'Remember me.' The poor old man, half blind and already half insane, sank beneath this blow. From that moment what was left of his reason vanished irrecoverably.

When Parliament met in November, there was no commission to open the session. The Great Seal was in abeyance. It was necessary to make immediate provision

for executing the functions of the Crown. The obvious expedient was a regency, with the Prince of Wales as regent; but at this point, which settled itself, a serious disagreement arose. The Government, following the example set by Pitt in 1788, held that the royal authority should be transferred to the Prince by a Bill, and that it should be subject to some restrictions. The Whigs on the other hand, adopting the doctrine of Fox, were of opinion that no Bill was necessary, but that the two Houses should merely present a joint address praying the Prince to assume the reins of government. Fox, indeed, went a step further. He held that the Prince had an inherent right to take up the reins as they fell from the King's hands, the only condition precedent being an attestation of the King's inability to discharge his royal duties. The Whigs did not on the present occasion take quite such high ground. Both parties practically agreed to proceed by Bill, and the only point in dispute was whether the royal authority should be transferred with or without conditions, the conditions suggested being that no new peers should be created, that no pension or place should be granted other than was necessary by law, and that the King's person should be left in the hands of the Queen. It was proposed to exact these conditions only for twelve months.

In the debate on the resolutions which were introduced as a preface to the Bill Lamb took an active part, steering a middle course. He repudiated the notion of inherent right and of proceeding by address. He held it to be the duty of Parliament to confer the powers of royalty upon the Prince by a Bill, but he was opposed to any restrictions. Considering their character and for how short a time they were to be imposed, it will probably be thought that there

was not much left to fight about; but it must be remembered that something more than a constitutional principle was at stake. The dignity of the Prince was menaced. It looked like an insult to fetter him with restrictions. If they were meant to endure but for twenty-four hours, the offence would be intrinsically all the same. The Whigs were still the Prince's friends, and they believed that he was still their friend. The traditions which began with Fox still lingered. The Whigs and the Prince were supposed to be in standing opposition to the Tories and the Court. Hence the Prince's accession to royal power was hailed by the Whigs as the dawn of a brighter day, and they were eager to lay some tribute of homage at his feet. Lamb was put forward on behalf of his party to move an amendment on the resolution for limiting the powers of the Prince Regent. We need not reproduce his arguments. They were the arguments of a courtier who had his eyes all the time fixed upon the rising sun whose gracious beams had so often mingled with the lesser splendours of Melbourne House. He was answered by Canning, who paid mellifluous compliments to his young friend, and then the amendment was disposed of. The great thing was to have fought in such a cause. To have lost was nothing.

The Prince was now installed in all but royal authority, and it remained to be seen what use he would make of his new powers. The first use he made of them was not encouraging. He reappointed the Duke of York to the command of the army. The scandals which led to his dismissal were still green. The street cries which rang indecorous versions of his adventures into the ears of old and young had hardly died away. Althorp and Lamb were still under the fond impression that their Parliamentary

action had placed an insuperable barrier in the way of the Duke's return. The Prince Regent undid their work by a stroke of the pen. Lord Milton moved a vote of censure on ministers for recommending the reappointment, but Lamb stood aloof. Forty-nine members voted for the motion, but Lamb was not one of the forty-nine. He invented lame apologies in self-exculpation. He thought that enough had been done, that a sufficient warning had been given, and that the Duke after all was perhaps 'morally innocent.' It would probably not be unjust to surmise that he did not care to fly in the face of the Prince Regent, now, perhaps, on the eve of redeeming his long professions of attachment to the Whigs. The party flattered themselves that they were on the verge of restoration to power. What really awaited them was the discomfiture of all their hopes. The Prince satisfied his 'historical conscience' by declaring that he had 'no predilections,' that Whigs or Tories would suit him equally well if they would only come to terms and make a pleasant Cabinet selection from both sides. He did not choose to see that certain principles, the Catholic claims, and a more liberal policy in home affairs among them, stood in the way. The result, after endless intriguing, was, no doubt, in harmony with his wishes. The Tories were installed in power. Lord Liverpool took up the reins, which he kept in his hands till 1827. Protestant ascendency and repressive measures were the order of the day. The borough-mongers rallied to the support of the 'minions' of the Prince Regent, and among those who lost their seats at the ensuing general election was Lamb, who bade farewell to Parliament for the next four years.

CHAPTER V

TROUBLES AT HOME

Lady Caroline Lamb—Sinister auguries fulfilling themselves—Advent of Lord Byron and 'Childe Harold'—The flirtations of Lady Caroline, serio-comic verging upon tragedy—William Lamb's conjugal ruminations—Marriage of Lord Byron and its results at Brocket—Waywardness or madness?—A separation planned and frustrated—The future Lord Lytton a sacrificial victim—Separation at last—A 'psalm of life.'

In throwing up politics for the present, Lamb yielded more or less passively to a variety of considerations. He could not but feel that the seven years he had spent in the House had not been crowned with distinguished success. He had spoken on several important occasions, nor could any one deny that his speeches were ornate, highly polished, and strongly tinctured with constitutional lore; but they had produced no impression, and had won no recognition more valuable or more promising than now and then a ceremonial compliment. There was a change, moreover, in the prospects of the party to which, more by force of circumstances than by conviction, he had attached himself, and it was possible that the party itself might be slipping out of existence. The hopes founded on the supposed predilections of the Prince Regent had proved delusive. Henceforth, if he was to act with his party, he would be brought into frequent collision with the illustrious patron of

Melbourne House, and such a course was not to be lightly ventured upon. His father held a place in the Prince's household, and a step in the peerage was an object of domestic ambition. If he could not promote its attainment by his personal influence in politics, he might, at any rate, abstain from throwing needless obstacles in the way. It was out of the question that he should cast in his lot decisively with the Radical group of members who had occasionally had the support of his votes. He did not share in their popular sympathies nor in their earnest convictions, and yet he could not make up his mind as yet to an open rupture. On the whole, it would be just as well to stand aside for a year or two and see how events would shape themselves. These considerations would probably have sufficed, but they were reinforced from another quarter. His domestic relations were not in the happiest plight. He had worry and vexation at home.

In glancing at the early years of Lady Caroline Lamb, as described in her letters, we have already seen indications of a character which did not promise well for the repose and dignity of married life. Her union with Lamb seemed to be one of affection, and in ordinary cases this might be accepted as a sufficient augury of future happiness. It is all that is usually attainable, most persons have to start upon their joint voyage with no better security, and the expectations based upon it are seldom wholly disappointed. In the case of Lady Caroline the guarantee was of less than the usual value. As our acquaintance with her extends, we find that the whole of her life was composed of a series of episodes in which love, or what passed for it, played a leading part. Lamb had the honour, perhaps the ill-fortune, of becoming the hero of one of these episodes, but unluckily it was only

the first of the series, if indeed it was the first. In her passion for him there may have been some under-current of permanency. We find it welling up to the surface by fits and starts, and apparently surviving all other attachments, but the long interval between the beginning and the end was infinitely chequered. She has been described as a woman of impulse; but impulse is not quite the right word. It is true that she was often borne away on a current which seemed irresistible, but she had first deliberately opened the floodgates and calculated exactly upon what would happen. She was on the whole a very cool practitioner. The basis of her character was wilfulness, and vanity was the main-spring which set the volitional apparatus going. She would select with keen judgment some incident in social life which afforded ample play for two parts, a torturer and a victim, and though she began by being the first she often ended by becoming the second. When the game was once begun she threw herself into it with the whole force of her nature, and managed to develop a drama in which her own feelings became insensibly engaged till she was no longer at liberty to disentangle herself the moment she pleased. It has been hinted that she was mad; but there was no madness in the case. She dallied with momentary rushes of feeling, which, however, were intellectual rather than emotional, and were not so much impulses as whims. But when she was once in them it was not so easy to get out, and by force of acting she often became for a time sincere, with final discomfiture and mortification to herself, and infinite annoyance to everybody about her, and to her husband most of all.

These peculiarities grew upon her by degrees. Perfection in the arts most natural to her was not reached at once,

and perhaps for the development they subsequently achieved she was not alone to blame. It has been said that she and her husband were an ill-assorted couple, and the remark is so obvious that it must be true, though it does not cover all the facts. In 1807 their only son was born, the Prince of Wales standing sponsor for him at the font. He was called George Augustus Frederic, after his royal godfather, Augustus being the name selected from the three for daily use, and its magnificent suggestiveness offered a melancholy contrast to the destiny thus honoured. Outwardly healthy, and even handsome as he grew up, there were symptoms in infancy of a constitutional ailment which showed itself later on in an infirmity of the intellect that lasted through life. There was no actual imbecility, but rather the constant promise of a maturity which was watched for with unceasing anxiety, but never came. This calamity was but slowly realised, and it was not till the stage of manhood was passed that all hope had to be mournfully abandoned. At the period of which we are now speaking there was nothing to becloud the sky; there was only too much sunshine. Life at Melbourne House was an incessant round of frivolous dissipation. The after-supper revels often lasted till daybreak. But gaiety and merriment did not bring happiness, and, looked at from no puritanical point of view, but from that of a rational economy of enjoyment, it is probable that few households were more forlorn. Mr. Torrens, who appears to have gathered up the traditions of the family from authentic sources, says of Lamb that 'disenchantment seemed to have spread its insidious spell over him, and that, though weary of *ennui*, he could not bring himself to set about any undertaking requiring effort or toil.' Of his wife it is said that, 'unceasingly active, she spent her existence with as little concentration of aim.

Painting, music, reading, writing verses, patronising plays, taking part in private theatricals, dreaming romantically, and talking in a way to make people stare; riding on horseback, often coquetting, sometimes quarrelling (she hardly knew what it was about) with her husband, trying to please her father-in-law, who thought her a fidget, and trying to please her child, whose wistful gaze of incurious wonder made her for the moment staid and sad. These, and a world of intermingling trifles, filled up her time.' In a letter printed among Lord Melbourne's Papers, she writes in one of her penitential moods, 'I think lately, my dearest William, we have been very troublesome to each other, which I take by wholesale to my own account, and mean to correct, leaving you in retail a few little sins which I know you will correct.' Apparently about the same period Lamb thus moralises in his journal: 'The general reason against marriage is this, that two minds, however congenial they may be, or however submissive the one may be to the other, can never act like one. It is the nature of human things that no man can be free and independent.' The conclusion seems too large for the argument. A passage follows which is more specific: 'By marriage you place yourself upon the defensive instead of the offensive in society, which latter is admitted to be in all contentions the most advantageous mode of proceeding.' Then follows a reflection which looks like experience: 'Before marriage the shape, the figure, the complexion, carry all before them; after marriage the mind and character unexpectedly claim their share, and that the largest, of importance.' He then remembers that before he was married if he saw anything wrong in a house, he used to lay all the fault upon the master, who might at once put a stop to it if he pleased; but, he adds, 'since I have married I

find that this was a very rash and premature judgment.' Almost the last of these fugitive entries relates to the effect produced, 'particularly upon women,' by what others say of their husbands. 'Nothing's fixed. Their opinion rises or falls according to what they hear in the world, according to the lightest observation or the most casual remarks.' These reflections are not remarkably luminous. They do not appear to be particularly acute or manly, while on the side of philosophy they are certainly defective. They almost suggest that a husband who could soliloquise in this rather moonstruck fashion was hardly the best fitted to fix the wayward fancies of Lady Caroline.

Such was the state of affairs with the inmates of Melbourne House when a portent suddenly burst upon society in the person of Lord Byron. In the autumn of 1811 he returned from his two or three years' travel in Turkey and Greece, bringing the first two cantos of 'Childe Harold' in his pocket. They were soon in his publisher's hands, and made their appearance in February the following year. The poem produced a great sensation. Byron awoke one morning and found himself famous. Some proofs had been struck off beforehand for the perusal of private friends, one of which was sent to Rogers, who gave or lent it to Lady Caroline Lamb. She read it, and was enchanted like the rest of the world, and before many hours had passed by all her friends knew that she had read it and what she thought of it. All the world was soon talking of Byron, and what was learned of his previous career, supplemented by elaborate portraitures in the poem itself, which were assumed to be autobiographical, presently crystallised into myths. He was a lord—that at least was certain. He had come unexpectedly into his heritage. He was the owner of

a fine estate and of a weather-beaten abbey where the ashes of his ancestors who came over at the Conquest had reposed for ages. He had passed through many vicissitudes in his short life. He was more than suspected of having been prodigiously wicked. The opening pages of his poem threw a lurid light upon his escapades. But there were signs that his heart had been disillusionised, and perhaps crushed. He had roamed in many lands, and had come back with a halo of Eastern splendour round his head. To see him was to be convinced that all this, and more than this, was true. His pensive face, the melancholy that shaded his noble brow, was irresistible. It suggested conquests and invited consolation. There was witchery in his reputed wickedness. It gave piquancy to his charms, and threw a colour of romance into a dawning future with which it was perhaps hoped that dreams of reformation did not too largely mingle. That sad averted glance, in which scorn and tenderness seemed to blend in equal measure, told how much he had suffered and how much he might still enjoy if sympathetic natures could be found. Language can hardly exaggerate the folly which prevailed, though some faint gleams which descended within the reach of living memories may help us to judge of what it must have been when the burning fit was on.

Lady Caroline found in Byron a foeman worthy of her steel, and forthwith prepared for the attack. There is not much room for doubt as to how the fight began, nor as to the conditions of the combat. Taking only what we know of her from contemporary sources, and making due allowance for the feverish extravagance of her own admissions, there can be but little hesitation in assuming that she was the aggressor, and that, whatever suffering may afterwards have

been endured, no claim can be alleged for pity. In a letter to her friend Lady Morgan, she tells how their acquaintance began. 'I was one night at Lady Westmoreland's; the women were all throwing their heads at him. Lady Westmoreland led me up to him, I looked carnestly at him, and turned on my heel. My opinion in my journal was, "mad, bad, and dangerous to know." A day or two passed; I was sitting with Lord and Lady Holland when he was announced. Lady Holland said, "I must present Lord Byron to you." Lord Byron said, "That offer was made to you before; may I ask why you rejected it?" He begged permission to come and see me. He did so the next day. Rogers and Moore were standing by me. I was on the sofa. I had just come in from riding; I was filthy and heated. When Lord Byron was announced, I flew out of the room to wash myself. When I returned, Rogers said, "Lord Byron, you are a happy man. Lady Caroline has been sitting in all her dirt with us, but when you were announced she flew to beautify herself." Lord Byron wished to come and see me at eight o'clock, when I was alone; that was my dinner hour. I said he might. From that moment for more than nine months he almost lived at Melbourne House. It was then the centre of all gaiety, at least in appearance.'

The acquaintance thus begun soon became something more than friendship. They called each other by endearing names. Her passion broke out in verse. In one of her letters she offered him all her jewels if he was in want of money. Their intimacy soon became notorious, and speculations were rife as to how far it was compatible with innocence. Rogers took the charitable view—and he was a close and cynical observer; but he was the friend of both, and a case must be pretty far gone when a friend can

volunteer the part of a juryman. When they were at the same parties, she returned with him in the same carriage. When she had not been invited, she watched him on his way home for the chance of a moment's interview. Rogers found her waiting for him one night to beg his interposition in a quarrel she had just had with Lord Byron. These quarrels became frequent, and it soon appeared that the poet was bored with the craving for a monopoly which it was not in his nature to bestow.

A serious cause for jealousy presented itself before long. However strange it might appear, it was a fact that Byron thought of marrying. It is said that he sought the advice of Lady Melbourne on this delicate subject, protesting his virtues, and asking her help in delivering him from 'the daughters of Heth.' It is not improbable that Lady Melbourne took the liberty of giving him the advice unasked. She kept a diligent watch over the happiness of her son, and would no doubt have been glad of any arrangement which would place the too welcome visitor under matrimonial watch and ward. The lady suggested was Lady Caroline's cousin-in-law, the only child of Lady Melbourne's eldest brother, Sir Ralph Milbanke. Lord Byron proposed to her in the autumn of the same year in which he had made Lady Caroline's acquaintance. He met with a refusal, but a refusal couched in such kind terms, that it encouraged a correspondence which ended two years later in a second offer. This was accepted, and the marriage took place in February 1815. To be ousted by her cousin from the blessedness of sole possession to which she had aspired was a strain too severe to be endured patiently. After an altercation with Lord Byron at Lady Heathcote's ball in June 1813, she tried to throw herself

out of the window, and then, in a fit of melodramatic despair, stabbed herself with a supper-knife. If any wound was inflicted it was not serious. To put an end to the scandal, her mother, Lady Bessborough, took her over to Ireland. Before consenting to go, she made a personal appeal to Byron. The interview was not successful, but it was followed by a soothing letter, in which he declared that till that moment he never knew 'the madness of my dearest and most beloved friend,' and, while firmly counselling submission, wound up by saying, 'I was and am yours, freely and entirely to obey, to honour, love, and fly with you, when, where, and how yourself might and may determine.' To Ireland, nevertheless, she went; their correspondence was kept up during her absence, but, on learning that she was about to return, Lord Byron sent her a very different letter, which put an end to all intimacy. It was couched in terms of brutal frankness, and bore on its seal the coronet and initials of a lady whom she recognised as a rival. A serious illness was the result, and before she recovered Byron had left England.

What William Lamb thought and felt through all this troubled period may perhaps be set down among those things that are better imagined than described. Probably he was of the same opinion, and said nothing. No reference is made to these later experiences in his journal. There can be no doubt that his sensitive and fastidious nature felt the humiliation keenly. It is likely that many of the scandals that were afloat never reached his ears. So far as his own observation went, he might choose to be a little blind, and for the rest to suffer in silence rather than run the risk of making himself ridiculous. He had one great refuge in his love of books, which is said to have grown upon him at

this period, and another in his dislike to take trouble over anything. When half resolved upon some step which might help to mitigate the nuisance of his wife's follies, he perhaps said to himself, as he used to say to his colleagues in the Cabinet many years later, 'Why can't you leave it alone?' He has been censured for want of resolution in not showing more firmness with his wife—and his wife herself figures among his censurers. She told her friend Lady Morgan that he took no care of her, and did not mind how many men she flirted with. Another remark perhaps goes nearer the secret of their unhappiness. She complains that he never treated her seriously. Balzac had not yet reached the age of authorship, or there are some chapters in his 'Physiologie du mariage' which even Lamb, man of the world as he was, might have read with advantage. Perhaps he took too little trouble with his wife, perhaps less than she deserved. He had thought fit to marry a capricious but clever woman, and he should have made up his mind to adjust himself to his fate. After all, it is only a part of the discipline of life, and has to be accepted uncomplainingly. With all her faults, Lady Caroline had some virtues and many charms. For one thing she was kind-hearted. One day she saw a child hurt in the street. She took him up in her carriage and conveyed him to his home. The late Lord Lytton, a boy at the time, heard of the incident, and sent her some verses which it had inspired. He and his brother were invited to Brocket, and Lady Caroline drew his portrait. Some years later Lord Lytton knew her well, too well for his own happiness, and he has left a description of her to which Earl Cowper in his preface to Lord Melbourne's Papers refers with satisfaction: 'She had large hazel eyes, capable of much varied expression, exceedingly

good teeth, and a pleasant and a musical intonation of voice, despite a certain artificial drawl, habitual to what was called the Devonshire House set. Apart from these gifts she might be considered plain. But she had, to a surpassing degree, the attribute of charm, and never failed to please if she chose to do so. There was indeed a wild originality in her talk: combining great and sudden contrast, from deep pathos to infantine drollery, now sentimental, now shrewd, it sparkled with anecdotes of the great world, and of the eminent persons with whom she had been brought up, or been familiarly intimate; and ten minutes after it became gravely eloquent with religious enthusiasm, or shot off into metaphysical speculations, sometimes absurd, sometimes profound, generally suggestive and interesting. A creature of caprice and impulse and whim, her manner, her talk, and her character shifted their colours as rapidly as those of a chameleon.' Undoubtedly it would have required a vast amount of trouble, a variety of splendid gifts, and patience all but inexhaustible, to gratify the roving fancies and fill the imagination of this remarkable woman. Lamb may have known enough of her and of himself to feel that it was hopeless to make the attempt.

After Byron had left England, within a few months of his separation from his wife, Lady Caroline began to take her revenge for his desertion. On reading a copy of verses which he was supposed to have addressed to her through the press at the moment of leaving, she made a bonfire in front of Brocket Hall, burnt him in effigy and sent him an account of the performance. Having 'played the devil,' as is said in 'Don Juan,' she then 'wrote a novel.' In 'Glenarvon' Byron and she figured as the principal characters under a thin disguise of fiction, and her adventures

and humiliations were exhibited to the gaze of a curious and mocking world. It took her, she says, a month to write the book. She did it at night, sitting at her desk dressed like a page in boy's clothes. Her page was her chief companion by day. She played at ball with him in the dining-room. He liked to throw detonating squibs into the fire. She scolded him, but he persisted. One day when he had thrown a squib into the fire she flung the ball at his head. He cried out, 'Oh, my lady, you have killed me!' Out of her senses she ran into the hall, and screamed 'O God, I have murdered the page.' The rumour of an actual murder flew abroad, and there was prodigious excitement in the neighbourhood. It was impossible to put up with such escapades any longer, and the family insisted on a separation. Lamb slowly and mournfully consented. It was agreed on both sides that the painful step should be taken with all possible quietness and decorum. At length the final arrangements were made and the documents ready for signature. At the last moment Lamb went to his wife's room for a final interview, and especially to talk with her about their child, who was to be left at Brocket. The interview lasted so long that his brother thought it right to venture in, when he found Lady Caroline seated by his side tenderly feeding him with bits of thin bread and butter. She had had him to herself for one half hour, and her low, caressing voice had won a short reprieve.

This incident brings us to the point of time at which our main narrative should be resumed, but we do not wish to return, except for a moment, to Lady Caroline, and will therefore anticipate a little. We have just witnessed another of those many episodes of which, as has been said, her married life was made up. It was one of the most

touching and most critical, but it was not by any means the last. Words of reconciliation had been spoken, but closer union was beyond hope, and the domestic wound remained open for another ten years, till it was closed at last by the hand of death. There was an election for Westminster in 1818, in which George Lamb stood against Hobhouse. Lady Caroline entered heartily into the cause of her brother-in-law, and wrote a polite note to Godwin, begging for his vote and interest, though expressing some fear that his well-known sentiments would prevent him from supporting a man of George Lamb's very lukewarm politics. The author of 'Caleb Williams' replied that she was mistaken; though in theory a republican, in practice he was a Whig, and he should be happy to vote for George Lamb. This led to a closer acquaintance with the philosophical novelist, and Godwin one day received a letter from Lady Caroline inviting him to Brocket. The intimacy may be left to take its course, but the letter is a curiosity. Lady Caroline wished to consult him about her son, and also about herself. 'Tell me,' she said, 'would you dislike paying me a little visit? . . . I am tormented with such superabundance of activity and have so little to do that I want you to tell me how to go on. It is all very well if one died at the end of a tragic scene after playing a desperate part; but if one lives, instead of growing wiser one remains the same victim of every folly and passion, without the excuse of youth and inexperience. Pray say a few wise words to me I have nothing to do—I mean necessarily. There is no particular reason why I should exist; I conduce to no one's happiness, and, on the contrary, I stand in the way of many. Besides, I seem to have lived 500 years, and feel I am neither better nor worse than

when I began.' Such were the pleasant confessions of Lady Caroline. Godwin had his own novel experiences in matrimony, and he happened by a strange coincidence or fatality to be the step-father of that Jane Clermont who had with Byron, soon after Lady Caroline ceased to know him, her own obscure tragedy of romance and guilt. Perhaps Lady Caroline was not aware of the fact. Anyhow, Godwin brought with him no potent medicine for a mind diseased.

About the same time that she was imploring Godwin to tell her how to 'go on,' she renewed the acquaintance with Lord Lytton, which, as we have seen, began when he was a boy. At her invitation he visited Brocket, being then a Cambridge student. He was one-and-twenty, while she was between thirty and forty, but the disparity made no difference. He fell beneath her tender spells, became for a time violently enamoured, was driven half-mad with jealousy, and had to retreat to save himself. He 'lost twenty ounces of blood' and got better. At a time when she chose to fancy herself dying she sent for him. He sat by her bedside for hours, and 'if ever counterfeit tenderness seemed real hers did.' She contrived to write him a few lines, though forbidden by the doctors. When she recovered, though still kind and affectionate, there was a coldness in her manner. She begged that he would be to her like a son or the dearest of friends, but not her lover ; yet uttering these dissuasive sentiments with such exquisite grace that the poor youth was 'more in love with her than ever.' At Lady Cowper's ball the secret was revealed. She never spoke to him. Her dearest friend now was Mr. Russell, 'a fashionable beau, extremely handsome, but dull, insipid, and silly.' When they were all going to bed Bulwer said

'good-bye' to her, announcing his intention to leave next morning before she was up. By nine next morning he got rom her a note imploring him to stay. He went to her room. 'She entreated me to forgive her, threw her arms about me, and cried.' At dinner Mr. Russell sat opposite him. 'He wore a ring. It was one which Lord Byron had given Lady Caroline—one which was only to be worn by those she loved. I had often worn it myself. She had wanted me to accept it, but I would not, because it was so costly. And now *he* wore it.' Bulwer left next morning, and the night after was in a fever. If he had to lose blood the quantity he lost was not a drop too much. 'Lamb, by-the-bye,' says Bulwer to his friend, 'was particularly kind to me. I think he saw my feelings. He is a singularly fine character for a man of the world.'

This happened in 1824. It was the year of Byron's death. He died in April, and if Lady Cowper's ball, the exact date of which is not given, took place later in the year, the illness which brought Bulwer to her bedside, and which rendered another passion necessary for her convalescence, may have been anything but fictitious. That event threw her for a time into utter prostration. Riding out one morning, at the gates of Brocket Park she met a hearse and mourning coaches. Asking whose funeral it was, she was told it was Lord Byron's. He had been brought over from Missolonghi to be buried. It was the first news she had received of his death, and its suddenness gave her a severe shock. But the symptoms of her recovery were more remarkable than her illness, affording a further illustration of the fact that love with her was more an affair of the imagination than of the heart, and that a change of object, or some new device for relieving her from

the burden of inactivity, was always enough to effect a cure. After Byron's death she gave herself up to livelier escapades than ever. Every day brought with it some new extravagance. She would leap into the middle of the dining-table to give a lesson to the startled butler as to the proper height of a centre-piece. On going to a ball she would insist upon taking her seat by the side of the coachman, and throw herself into the arms of the footman on getting down. At the same time she grew more and more exacting at home. She quarrelled with her husband for his impassiveness. It would have pleased her better if he had stormed away in return, as he sometimes did when human nature could stand the strain no longer, raining upon her 'a terrible tempest of rebuke and ridicule, intermixed with reasoning harder to bear than either, for the space of half an hour.' Then he would relent, and all be calm again for a time. But these things were of daily occurrence, and there was not a moment when she might not fly off into paroxysms of ungovernable rage. One night, after a scene at the dinner table at Melbourne House, he quietly ordered his horses and drove off to Brocket. While pensively musing during the small hours, he heard a noise in the corridor, and on opening the door found his wife lying there, 'convulsed,' says Mr. Torrens, 'with what she took for grief.' At last the fatal hour had come. Separation seemed to be the only alternative. Both families concurred in recognising its necessity, and did what they could to lighten the blow. Lady Caroline was left at Brocket, and her husband divided his time between the two Melbourne Houses at Whitehall and in Derbyshire. Correspondence was kept up, there were occasional visits and something like the old love, or something better, seemed

to grow up through the crevices of later ruins. Her husband had treated her seriously enough at last, but her health was shattered, and the rest of her life was but a slow lingering on the way to the grave. In her confidential letters she spoke of him with respect and gratitude as her best protector and truest friend, whom alone she had ever really loved. In December 1825 she sent him in a letter the following verses. They are a tribute to herself as well as to him, and may well conclude this sad part of our narrative :

Loved one! No tear is in mine eye,
Though pangs my bosom thrill,
For I have learned when others sigh
To suffer and be still.

Passion and pride and flatt'ry strove,
They made a wreck of me,
But oh! I never ceased to love,
I never loved but thee.

My heart is with our early dream
And still thy influence knows,
Still seeks thy shadow on the stream
Of memory as it flows:

Still hangs o'er all the records bright
Of moments brighter still
Ere love withdrew his starry light,
Ere thou hadst suffered ill.

'Tis vain! 'tis vain! no human will
Can bid that time return;
There's not a light on earth can fill
Again love's darkened urn.

'Tis vain—upon my heart, my brow,
Broods grief no words can tell,
But grief itself were idle now—
Loved one, fare thee well.

CHAPTER VI

A FOLLOWER OF MR. CANNING

Again in Parliament—Influence of Huskisson—The charm of Canning—Lamb a convert, but does not leave his party, and sometimes votes with it—Votes for a committee of inquiry into the public expenditure—Speaks in favour of a reduction of expenditure—Votes for the suspension of Habeas Corpus and for the Six Acts—Opposed to Parliamentary Reform—The Catholic Association—Queen Caroline—Impecuniosity—A philosophy of credit—Proclaimed a political renegade, and 'out' once more.

FROM these scenes of domestic discord and chagrin, it is some relief to step again into the more bracing atmosphere of politics. In 1816 William Lamb returned to the House of Commons as member for Northampton. The previous year his father had been raised to the peerage of the United Kingdom as Baron Melbourne. This was the fulfilment of a hope which had long been anxiously cherished. It also gave fixity to Lamb's prospects by promising him some day a seat in the House of Lords. On re-entering the House he took his place as a matter of course among his old friends on the opposition benches; but his opinions were still in the making, and they had undergone some change. He had lately seen more of his relative Mr. Huskisson, whose abilities he was beginning to respect. Huskisson was personally attached to Canning. He had spent the previous Christmas at Brocket, and talked over the state of politics

with Lady Melbourne. He foresaw that Mr. Canning would soon join the Government, and hoped that her son would be again in the House before long. The two things were joined together in his thoughts, and he probably felt that he had already made a convert.

It did not need much persuasion to bring Lamb over to the side of Canning. The eloquence of the brilliant ex-minister was of a kind which his own intellectual qualities disposed him to admire—ornate, resonant, and magnificently periodic, stronger far on the score of rhetoric than in solid argument. Canning, moreover, seemed to have struck out a middle course between the unyielding Toryism of Liverpool and Sidmouth and the reforming tendencies of the Whigs. He offered an alternative to either extreme, a line of action in which it would be possible for a man of moderate abilities to figure to advantage. In addition to all this, it appeared likely, on a fair calculation of probabilities, that Canning had the future in his grasp. It would require something like a revolution to bring the Whigs into power. What the people at large would do if they had the suffrage in their hands it was useless to conjecture. The House of Commons held the pass, and was not likely to surrender. But it was quite on the cards that Canning might succeed in transforming the ministry and in throwing open the door of office to outsiders whose views were liberal without being, as the phrase went, revolutionary. There was no telling what he might not do. He was ambitious, he had splendid talents, he was the most powerful speaker in the House, his enterprising policy when at the Foreign Office touched the popular imagination, he could lay some claim to the mantle of William Pitt. As the advocate of Catholic Emancipation, and favourable to more enlightened

views in matters of commerce, he had some hold upon Liberal sentiment, while he gratified the Tories by his unmeasured denunciation of all approaches to Parliamentary reform. He was a politician of the market as well as of the forum. He knew how to make a bargain, and comprehended that in order to get it was necessary to give. Hence he placed his wit and eloquence and sarcasm at the service of the enemies of progress as the condition on which he might hope to rule. Nevertheless, he was one of those men who catch the spirit of the time and become the interpreters of the age in which they live. What he would have done if his life had been prolonged after he reached supreme power can hardly be inferred from anything that he actually did.

Henceforth Lamb must be regarded as a disciple of Canning. He was the first of the Whigs to yield to his influence, and for a long time the only one. He did not think it necessary to change sides. On the question of party allegiance he held peculiar views. 'In politics,' he remarks in his journal, 'you may serve the cause of wisdom and justice better by remaining with those to whom you have attached yourself, even after you disapprove much of their conduct and prefer that of their adversaries, than by leaving them.' This appears to have been the principle on which he acted. There were, of course, many questions on which he could speak and vote with his old friends. It was so with the first movements of the Opposition in 1816. In the debate on the Address Mr. Brand moved an amendment pledging the House to a rigid inquiry into the public expenditure. Lord John Russell seconded the amendment, remarking in the course of his speech that 'the bare proposal that a standing army of 150,000 men should be

supported must alarm every friend to his country and its constitution.' Lamb voted for the amendment. He voted also for Lord Althorp's motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the pay of public officers with a view to retrenchment, and in a speech of some length condemned the proposal of the Government to substitute a Treasury Commission for a Select Committee, declaring that the House ought to look into these matters for itself. So at the commencement of the session of 1817, when Mr. Ponsonby, as the leader of the Opposition, moved an amendment to the Address, expressing regret that, in view of the prevailing distress, the Government had not thought it right to reduce the public expenditure, Lamb supported the amendment in an elaborate speech. Canning, who had recently taken office as President of the Board of Control, in replying to the speech took occasion to pay a compliment to Lamb, referring to him as 'an honourable gentleman who never spoke without making a deep impression by his eloquence and ability.' It was a dazzling bait, and with or without it the fish was caught. Henceforth on all important questions Lamb took his cue from Canning.

Such questions were not long in coming. As yet the Government were in the shallows, but popular discontent was rising fast, and they were soon to be assailed on all sides by the surging flood. The country was in a deplorable condition. Peace had come after a quarter of a century of war, but it had not been followed by plenty. During those years the nation, in addition to its enormous taxation, had spent hundreds of millions of borrowed capital, drawing a heavy bill upon posterity. The National Debt stood at 860,000,000*l.*, and the annual charge, includ-

ing the sinking fund, amounted to more than 46,000,000*l.* 'The charge of the debt,' says Mr. Spencer Walpole, 'was more than twice the sum required for the whole expenditure of the State at the beginning of the war.' Most of the money raised by loans had been spent at home. One result had been an artificial stimulus to industry and a higher rate of increase in the population. With the close of the war there came a great recoil, and multitudes were thrown out of employment. To add to the hardships of the poor the season of 1816 was one of the worst on record. The price of wheat rose to 105 shillings a quarter, and the average wages of working-men were not enough to find their families in bread. The taxes were ruinous to all, except, it was said, to those who lived upon them, and they were legion. It was only natural that this wide-spread suffering should lead to political discontent, and that discontent should grow into disaffection. The Government were not responsible for the distress which prevailed, and no measures they could have taken would have brought effectual relief. The malady, so far as it was political, lay in a want of sympathy between the people and the governing classes, and in the absolute impossibility of compelling the attention of the House of Commons. It seemed to the people that their rulers were deaf, blind, and dumb. Hence a cry went up everywhere for Parliamentary Reform. In the meantime spies were busy at work, employed by the Government as volunteers if not sought out by them, and alarming reports were poured in at headquarters. There was a great meeting of all shades of Radicals at Spa Fields, a mock march upon the Tower, and a raid upon the gunsmiths on Snow Hill. The climax was reached when stones were thrown at the Prince Regent's carriage. The Government

felt it was time to take action when his sacred person was assailed.

This was a crucial and perhaps a cruel test for Lamb. He was named a member of the Secret Committee of Inquiry which was appointed at the instance of Lord Sidmouth for the purpose of examining the reports that had been forwarded to the Government. The Government had, as was usual, a large majority on the committee, and the result of their deliberations was a series of Bills, among them one for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and another for suppressing seditious meetings. Lamb supported both. Mr. Torrens says that 'as a member of the Secret Committee, he was ready to bear his share of any odium that might be excited by measures founded upon their report.' But he was not required to approve of those measures because he had been a member of the committee. Other Liberals had been on it, and were among their strongest opponents. Though in very bad health, the Bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act brought Lord John Russell down to the House. 'I am determined,' he said in his speech, 'that no weakness of frame, no indisposition of body, shall prevent me from protesting against the most dangerous precedent which this House ever made.' Referring to the fact that the Habeas Corpus Act had been presented for the Royal Assent at the very height of the so-called Popish Plot, he said, 'We talk much, I think a great deal too much, of the wisdom of our ancestors. I wish we would imitate the courage of our ancestors. They were not ready to lay their liberties at the foot of the throne upon every vain and imaginary alarm.' Lamb was proof against this appeal, and followed Canning into the Government lobby; while Brougham, Burdett, Folkestone, Mackin-

tosh, Romilly, Tavistock, Althorp, and Cavendish passed into the other.

The next test which his political virtue had to undergo was furnished in connection with the famous meeting held in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, and ending in what is commonly known as the 'Peterloo Massacre.' At the order of a magistrate a troop of Yeomanry Cavalry had pushed their way through the crowd to serve a writ on Mr. Hunt, one of the speakers on the platform. Not being able to get through easily, the yeomanry struck out with their swords. A scene of frightful disorder ensued, and matters became still worse when the Hussars were ordered up to clear the ground. The first rumours which spread through the country were much exaggerated, and the name which tradition has given to the affair suggests the idea of extensive slaughter. It was found at the end of the day that six persons had been killed, including one of the yeomanry and a special constable. More than seventy were wounded. The news made a great sensation throughout the country. The Government sent letters of thanks in the name of the Prince Regent to the Lancashire and Cheshire magistrates, and Parliament was summoned to pass the measures which were thought necessary. They are known as the Six Acts, and a stain of infamy has never ceased to attach to them. Their general object was to increase the power of the magistrates, to put down seditious meetings, and to limit still further the freedom of the press by making the law of libel more stringent and extending the newspaper stamp to publications which had hitherto been exempt. By seditious meetings all meetings were understood which were held to discuss the conduct of ministers or to promote a reform of Parliament. Such meetings could not be held in future

without the licence of a magistrate, who was authorised to preside over them and maintain order. When these measures were brought forward, Lord Althorp moved as an alternative the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the conduct of the magistrates at Manchester, and Lamb spoke in support of the motion, alleging that an inquiry was desirable, in the interest of the magistrates themselves. Lord Althorp's proposal was soon disposed of. The Six Acts were not carried without strenuous and protracted opposition. A few of the old Whigs voted with the Government, but the party as a whole stood firm. Lamb might have found a very good reason for taking the same course, since the Committee of Inquiry which he thought necessary had been refused, but he went with his new friends.

In his speech on Lord Althorp's motion Lamb had referred incidentally to the question of Parliamentary reform. He said he understood that an honourable friend of his was about to bring forward a measure to effect a reform in Parliament. He should be ready to support it if he thought its provisions good, but he had hitherto objected to the plans of the advocates of Parliamentary reform, because he thought them not likely to effect their object, and tending to degrade rather than to improve the representation of the people. Canning, the uncompromising opponent of all reform, might have said the same. The allusion was to a notice which Lord John Russell had given of his intention to move the disfranchisement of the borough of Grampound. The borough in question was neither better nor worse than any dozen of other Cornish boroughs, but in its case the mask of secrecy had accidentally fallen off through a quarrel between the candidates,

and its corruption had become notorious. Lord John's motion comprised four points; the disfranchisement of all boroughs where gross bribery and corruption were shown to prevail, the transfer of the seats to some great town or to the largest counties, the duty of the House to provide better means for the detection of bribery at elections, and the immediate disfranchisement of Grampound. The Government met him half-way, offering to accept a Bill for the disfranchisement of Grampound if he would withdraw his resolutions, and he fell in with the proposal, satisfied with having taken a first step, though a short one, in the direction of reform. For the present there was no hope of being able to do anything more, and there was some wisdom in fixing public attention on the most conspicuous vices of the system. In one sense it was no doubt absurd to pounce down upon a particular group of sinners when most of the boroughs were in the hands of private patrons, and numbers were regularly bought and sold. But a nice distinction might be set up between buying from a proprietor and buying from the voters direct. It is not worth while attempting to assess the relative morality of the two processes, but patrons as a rule liked to keep the burgesses in their own hands. When Lord Palmerston was returned for Newtown, in the Isle of Wight, in 1807, Sir Leonard Holmes made it a condition that he would never, even for the election, set foot in the place, 'so jealous was the patron lest any attempt should be made to get a new interest in the borough.' Lamb remarked it as an inconsistency in Lord John Russell that he proposed the disfranchisement of corrupt boroughs while he himself sat for Tavistock, a pocket borough belonging to his father the Duke of Bedford. It is perhaps a sufficient answer that in attacking the vast

fortress of corruption it was necessary to begin somewhere, and that a bad system could hardly be put to a better use than by making it the means of hastening its own extinction. Certain it is that the discussions raised in Parliament at intervals for a period of ten years over the rotten boroughs of Grampound, Penryn, and East Retford did much to quicken the indignation of the public, and to prepare the way for a comprehensive measure of reform.

With the reform movement Lamb at this period of his career had no sympathy. He might excusably take alarm at the extensive scheme proposed by Sir Francis Burdett, and hailed with enthusiasm by Radicals out of doors; but he looked with suspicion upon the tentative and preparatory proposals of Lord John Russell. He was thinking out his half-formed views on the subject, and the result so far was in favour of standing still. It is hardly fair to quote passages from his journal, since he obviously took no pains with them, and they are wanting in clearness, but they show the drift of his thoughts. Thus he writes: 'Majority—will of all—cannot acquiesce in it, touch upon it with reluctance —*in curiâ populum defenderem*, etc., but cannot go so far as to admit, when I am speaking, that the majority of the people are always in the right.' This is a proposition which few would maintain, and it should hardly have proved a stumbling-block. He notices the 'great increase of persons who think upon and take an active part in politics,' and the 'great rise into political power of merchants, manufacturers, and persons raised into consequence by the increasing trade of the country.' He reflects upon the 'extreme importance that correct notions should be formed by such persons, and that they should not immediately think that nothing is so easy as to reform the system, and to exclude every evil

which has heretofore been admitted.' He regards it as a reason against reform that 'it will not be attended by any of the benefits expected from it, and then more and more will be required, till the original argument against any innovation will be lost.' He anticipates that a reform of Parliament will lead to a 'total destruction of freedom of speech,' the reason given being that such a House of Commons as then existed, having a consciousness of its defects, was patient of criticism, while a House elected 'according to what is called theory and principle' will not allow itself to be freely and violently censured. These remarks, though desultory, illustrate his methods of reasoning. They show the sort of logic he used with himself. The time came when he threw his conclusions to the winds, but he was then under the stress of altered circumstances.

On January 29, 1820, George III. passed away. Owing to his long seclusion it was an event of no importance. The Prince Regent became King, and a numeral was changed in the royal title. But when the Prince became King, the Princess of Wales became Queen, and this necessary incident of his accession brought the long quarrel between them to a climax. The storm had long been brewing. Since 1813 the Princess had lived abroad, wandering through various countries of the East, as far as Ephesus and Jerusalem, and finally taking up a more permanent residence in Italy. Her conduct had been eccentric and more than indiscreet. Rumours highly unfavourable to her reputation had reached England, and spies were not wanting who, in communicating with their employers at home, painted her character in the darkest colours. Two years before the King's accession a Commission had been sent to Milan to inquire into her conduct

A heap of incriminatory evidence was accumulated and submitted to ministers, who were loth to touch it. One of the first things the King did on coming to the throne was to order the Archbishop of Canterbury to omit the Queen's name from the Liturgy, and direct Lord Liverpool to prepare a Bill for a divorce. The prelate did as he was bid; the Prime Minister refused. The King was told pretty plainly the predicament in which he stood. Divorce Bills were not uncommon. They were the means devised by custom for overriding the matrimonial law of the church. By the law as administered in the church-courts the marriage tie could not be severed; but as an Act of Parliament could do anything, it could separate man and wife. Divorce was then, as it remained till our days, a luxury in which only the rich could indulge. But in ordinary cases, the House of Lords, in whose hands, by a wise abstinence on the part of the House of Commons, such Bills were usually left, did not refuse to admit recriminatory evidence, and a husband who could be shown to have committed the same offence with which he charged his wife was disentitled to relief. How, then, would it stand with the King? His licentiousness was notorious. A list could be made of his mistresses. One of them he had appointed to attend upon his wife when she first came over as his bride. He had been unfaithful from the first day of his married life. It was almost certain that the ceremony which made her his wife made him a bigamist. At that moment he was still living in the practice of the sin which he affected to condemn. Then, or a little later, the reigning beauty might be seen at his table with the jewels which had been his daughter's flaming on her forehead. How could such a man, even though a king, venture to go to Parliament for a

divorce? Another course was open to him. Adultery in a Queen consort or a Princess of Wales was high treason. For this crime Henry VIII. sent two of his wives to the block. He might do the same; but, if he did, it would jeopardise his crown.

The great hope of the Government was that the Queen might be prevailed upon to remain abroad. In that case they were prepared to permit her to retain the royal title, to make her a handsome allowance, and to arrange that at the courts she was likely to visit she should be received with the honours proper to her rank. Brougham, whom she had made her Attorney-General, approved of this course; but the advice he tendered had to yield to her peremptory will. The Queen was resolved upon coming to England. She entered London amid an extraordinary display of popular enthusiasm. Ministers then relented, and the same night the King sent a message to both Houses, directing attention to the documentary evidence touching the conduct of the Queen, which he had ordered to be laid before them. The Lords appointed a committee to examine the evidence, and on the presentation of their report, which was adverse to the Queen, Lord Liverpool brought in a Bill 'to deprive her Majesty Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges, and exemptions of Queen consort of the realm, and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth.' The recrimination difficulty was got over by a legal quibble. Lord Eldon held that, as this was a public Bill, the King did not appear as plaintiff, and recriminating pleas might be rejected. The discussion on the Bill went on for months. Witnesses were examined on the minutest details. On this occasion the members exercised their rights, instead of

leaving the Bill in the hands of the law lords, and prurient peers had splendid opportunities. A magnificent throne was prepared for the King, who, however, did not appear, and the Queen sat on a chair of state before the bar. All England attended the trial, and every morning the press poured forth the disgusting story to listening millions. The public mind had never been so absorbed before. The Peterloo massacre, the Cato Street conspiracy, the state prisoners at York Castle, the repressive operation of the Six Acts, all political cries and grievances and wrongs were forgotten in this great issue. The Radicals became the most loyal of all in their enthusiasm for an injured Queen. The mass of the people 'rose' against the Bill, which slowly went on its way with waning fortunes. The second reading was carried by 123 votes to 95; the third reading by 108 to 99. This was enough. It would have been useless to send it to the Commons with no larger majority in its favour, and Lord Liverpool forthwith announced its withdrawal. The great case was at an end, and the nation went frantic with delight. The Queen, whose guilt few dispassionate minds could affect to doubt, was the heroine of the hour. Thousands of fathers and mothers, in the innocence of their hearts, when they carried their infant daughters to the font, gave them the name of Caroline.

One has to overcome a certain sense of disproportion in asking how Lamb bore himself in the Parliamentary controversy; but it must be admitted that few members of the House of Commons had stronger reasons for taking a personal interest in it than he. All through the days of the Regency, and still more in the earlier days before it began, the King had been the unwavering friend and patron of Melbourne House. Lamb had been bred to feel as

25889

much reverence for him as it was possible to entertain towards one who was something less than a galaxy of perfections. He had found in him a godfather for his son. The question on which he had to form an opinion and to vote was, in some measure, a test of his manliness and independence, and on the whole he stood it well. His own sad domestic experience helped to sharpen his insight and quicken his sympathies. Among all who had to take action in the matter, there was no more competent judge. Though fully alive to the Queen's misconduct, he could not take sides with the King. After the Bill was withdrawn, he went with the Opposition in endeavouring to give the Queen's name its proper place in the Liturgy. He voted twice against the Government on this question, and he supported the vote of censure which was proposed on the policy they had pursued from first to last. In taking this course, he happened also to be in perfect harmony with his political master. Canning had discountenanced the proceedings against the Queen from the very beginning. When the Milan papers were sent to him for perusal, he refused to break the seal. When the Bill of Pains and Penalties was introduced, he went off to Paris to be out of the reach of the discussion; and when it seemed likely to be dragged over into another year beyond the period for which his absence could, with any decency, be prolonged, he resigned his office at the Board of Control and quitted the Government.

From these ignominious shoals the nation soon floated into deeper water. The question of Catholic Emancipation was gathering force, to hold henceforth a dominant place in domestic politics till it was settled, or rather carried on a stage further, by the surrender of 1829. The revival of

agitation in Ireland was due to despair, the offspring of hope deferred. The question was made an open one in the Cabinet, but the King was inflexible, and so long as men were willing to serve him at the cost of suppressing their convictions the opinions they held were of little value. Eight times between 1805 and 1820 Bills or resolutions on the subject had been brought before Parliament, but all had failed. The earlier ones were rejected by the House of Commons, but for some years past successful opposition had been confined to the House of Lords. In 1821 Plunket introduced a Relief Bill in a speech which contemporary judges declare to have been of surpassing eloquence, but it met with the usual fate. The year following Canning brought in a much smaller measure, merely proposing that Catholic peers should be admitted to the House of Lords. It passed the Commons by a slender majority, but was thrown out by much larger numbers in the Upper House. The Catholic Association was O'Connell's reply to these repeated failures. Started in 1823, it met with prodigious success and soon became a formidable power; the organisation covered the whole country. There was a branch in every parish. All classes joined it. To raise the sinews of war, an appeal was made to the poverty-stricken peasants. One penny a month was the amount of contribution suggested. It was collected at the chapel doors, and the Catholic rent soon reached an average of 500*l.* a week. A system of representation was formed, and presently there sat in Dublin an assembly which was a Parliament in all but the name, and seemed prepared to take over the government of the country. On going over as Lord-Lieutenant before the Association was formed, Lord Wellesley had found it necessary to ask for an Insurrection Act and the suspension of

Habeas Corpus. With a representative assembly of the Irish people gathered within earshot of the Castle, he soon had to ask for something more.

The Government decided that their first duty was to put down the Association, and a Suppression Bill was introduced which passed as a matter of course without much difficulty. As soon as these measures were disposed of, the friends of Catholic Emancipation once more brought in a Relief Bill. It passed the Commons, but, according to established precedent, was thrown out in the Lords. Two other measures were then proposed—one to abolish the forty-shilling franchise in Ireland, the other to make a provision for the Catholic clergy. They were called the wings, with some allusion to aerial flotation. Borne up by two such pinions, perhaps the Emancipation Bill might soar above the obstacles which fear and bigotry had placed in its path. The Clergy Bill proposed that stipends should be paid to them by the State, at the rate of 1,000*l.* a year for the bishops, 200*l.* for the parish priests, and 60*l.* for the curates. It passed the House of Commons by a majority of forty-seven, but was attended with the usual fate in the Lords. The present generation may perhaps put it down to their credit that they alone stood in the way of a large measure of concurrent endowment. Before any of these Bills reached the House of Lords, the Duke of York, on presenting a petition against them from the Dean and Canons of Windsor, wound up his speech with this emphatic declaration: 'My own opinions, my lords, are well known. They have been carefully formed, and I cannot change them. I shall continue to act conformably to them, to whatever obloquy I may be exposed, in whatever circumstances and in whatever situation I may be placed, so help me God.' As the heir-presumptive to

the Crown, there was no difficulty in interpreting the allusion. Intolerance was to hold perpetual possession of the throne, and those who wished to enjoy its favours knew what course to take. This Anti-Catholic manifesto from a prince of the blood drew warm commendations from Lord Eldon, who, however, could not help expressing his regret that the Duke spent so much of his time with blacklegs.

Throughout these discussions Lamb favoured a 'judicious mixture' of coercion and concession. He was heartily on the side of the Catholic claims. There was not a particle of intolerance in his nature, and, though he probably had no theory as to the rights of conscience, he could well understand that in matters of religion every man should be allowed to go his own way. This was not merely because of his easy disposition. On some questions his disposition was not at all easy. He had reasoned himself into certain views, and he adhered to them at some sacrifice of friendship. But he was of fair and generous sentiments, full of kindliness, and averse to anything that savoured of oppression. Yet Liberalism had no great hold upon him on the side of principle. He was not the man to defend the pass with a few faithful comrades by his side when the enemy drew near. On the repressive measures which the Government considered necessary in coping with the Catholic crisis in Ireland he gave them his steady support. He voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. He spoke as well as voted in favour of the Bill for suppressing the Catholic Association. Retorting a cheer from Lamb which he thought derisive, Brougham in the course of a speech against the Bill assailed him with fierce invective as an apostate from his former professions. This drew forth a reply from Lamb in which he sought to explain and defend

his views. He thought the Association dangerous because, under pretence of seeking redress for particular grievances, it proceeded to discuss the whole political affairs of the empire. He had a further objection. 'When it was considered that the Catholic clergy claimed the power of absolution, the power of totally forgiving sins, then he maintained that their operations ought to be looked to with great caution, and only to be approved when directed to purposes purely spiritual.' In the debate on the second reading Lamb ventured to enter the lists against Sir James Mackintosh, who had suggested an excuse for certain violent language imputed to O'Connell on the ground that it was 'the rhetoric of just impatience, not the logic of dangerous conspiracy.' Lamb remarked that O'Connell was no inexperienced orator who might be led by the warmth of his feelings to say more than he meant. He also ridiculed the simile which honourable gentlemen had invented for Catholic Associations, calling them safety-valves; they were rather 'furnaces for raising the public feeling into fury.' By the line he took Lamb placed himself in opposition to the great body of the Liberal party. He voted for the abolition of the forty-shilling freeholders in Ireland and for the concurrent endowment proposals, but this only involved him in further complications.

Lamb had taken his own course since he re-entered Parliament, and a day of reckoning was at hand. He had earned the reputation of a renegade, and there were rumours that many of his constituents had turned against him. He was not assisted by the politics of his brother George, who had been returned for Westminster in 1818 in opposition to Hobhouse, whom he distanced by a large majority. The vacancy was caused by the lamented death of Sir Samuel

Romilly, and George Lamb presented himself to the electors as one who held the same opinions as their late representative. To conciliate his Radical opponents, who enjoyed the patronage of Jeremy Bentham and had among their leaders a man of more than local notability, Mr. Francis Place, clothier, of Charing Cross, he made rather large professions; but in these he was far outbid by Hobhouse and by Major Cartwright, who was also a candidate. The great Whig houses turned out for him, and there was a fierce fight, in which he came off winner, one half of his supporters being among those who had plumped for the ministerial candidate at the general election a few months before. Under these circumstances it is not strange that George Lamb should have been regarded as a ministerialist, and his Parliamentary conduct was held to confirm this view. William Lamb organised his brother's canvass, and did all he could to secure his return. He did the same for him at the next election, when there was a still fiercer fight. This contest reversed the previous decision as regards George Lamb. He was at the bottom of the poll, and Sir Francis Burdett and Hobhouse were triumphantly returned, the latter having in the meantime been sent to Newgate by the House of Commons for a breach of privilege, and thus acquired additional popularity. It was natural that Lamb and his brother should be classed together, and be regarded with suspicion as politicians who were sailing under false colours, and while still calling themselves Liberals were ready on all occasions to play into the hands of the Government.

At this time Lamb's domestic circumstances were peculiarly depressing. He was separated from his wife. His fondest hopes were mocked by his son's condition. To add to his private griefs he had suffered an irreparable loss

in his mother's death. The great lady, who for so many years presided over the grand doings at Melbourne House and played a brilliant part in the world of fashion, had passed away. Many tributes of warm admiration are on record from those who knew her. Social ambition was the inspiring motive of her career, and she won some of the chief prizes at which she aimed. Perhaps there were illusions which she outlived, but this is only a part of the common lot. If in the course of her experience she was led to discover that the best of life's bargains are not always those which are made at Vanity Fair, she had some solid gain to show at the end, though unhappily too late for re-investment. His letters show the intimate confidence and close companionship which subsisted between her and her favourite son. Amid the divergent tastes and interests of a not ideally assorted household, they always went together. To him she was always a steady friend; not perhaps in his earlier years the faithful monitor he needed, nor his wisest guide, but then and ever of unfailing devotedness to what she conceived to be his welfare. With the loss of her he had almost nothing left.

Nor was he at this period altogether free from cares of another kind. The million with which his father began life had been dwindling away. There is no difficulty in imagining how the money went. The social influence to which Lady Melbourne aspired involved a large expenditure. 'The new nobility,' says Mr. Torrens, 'thought it incumbent upon them to spend more money than those whose patents were of older date. Wealth being their only title to distinction, they had to show it in order to make their pretensions good.' Mr. Torrens mentions one fact which reveals much. Lord Melbourne had for some time been desirous of selling

a pension of 1,200*l.* a year which his father had bought from Lady Gower. 'It was the moiety of a grant in perpetuity, charged on the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall, and, in default, on that of the Excise, by Charles II., in favour of the first Earl of Bath, son of Sir Bevil Grenville, who fell at Lansdowne fight in defence of the royal cause.' Sir Matthew Lamb had given 36,000*l.* for it. In 1826, consols standing at about 75, the Treasury offered to buy it back at five-and-twenty years' purchase. Lord Melbourne closed with the offer. The pension had been mortgaged to Lord Mansfield for 26,000*l.*, and when this was paid off, a balance of only 6,000*l.* remained. Lamb had received at first but a slender allowance from his father. It had probably been increased, but his expenses were considerable, owing partly to the lavishness of his wife. Hence he was sometimes without a balance at his bankers', besides being seriously in debt. 'It is a curious illustration of his condition,' says Mr. Torrens, 'that on one occasion Francis Place [the clothier of Charing Cross], who had given him credit for some years, and who found it impossible to get a settlement of his account, had served him with a writ, instructing his solicitor to see what that would do, but, d—n it, nothing further.' It may have been just after he was served with this writ that he made the following entry in his diary: 'If your expenditure either amounts to or somewhat exceeds your income, it appears to me to be a great convenience not to purchase the whole of any one material article at one shop. It will be found more convenient to have 25*l.* each to pay to four tradesmen than 100*l.* to one. A creditor is less anxious over a smaller debt. If it is required, two out of the four may probably be induced to wait somewhat longer, when the one has probably an immediate necessity for so

large a sum of money. In short, a man to whom you owe a great deal which it is inconvenient for you to pay is your master, and of a man to whom you owe a few pounds which you can throw upon his counter at any time you are the master, and this latter appears to me much the most natural order of things.' In Lamb's transactions with the tailor of Charing Cross, this natural order seems to have been reversed.

In this impecunious condition he had to face the prospect of a contest for his Hertfordshire seat, with the further prospect of being beaten if he went to the poll. There was just one possible way of escape, easy, thrifty, and in all respects convenient, if the arrangement which seemed to offer it could be carried out. While the county was more than doubtful, the county town might be regarded as perfectly safe. Hertford returned two members, one supposed to represent the Hatfield, the other the Cowper interest. Mr. Calvert, who represented the Cowper interest, was popular in the county, his votes having given general satisfaction to the Liberal freeholders, who were disgusted with the conduct of Lamb. What could be easier than for them to change places? This accordingly was the plan quietly agreed upon. Calvert was to offer himself for the county, and Lamb to go in for the borough. But the secret oozed out, and the Hertford electors were indignant; the Liberals of the borough were no more willing to have a recreant politician thrust upon them than the Liberals of the county, and they forthwith chose a candidate for themselves in the person of Mr. Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, familiarly known in after years as Tom Duncombe, the member for Finsbury. Mr. Duncombe accordingly took the field. The contest began a year before the election

took place, the dissolution which was expected in 1825 having been deferred till 1826. The new candidate, with his splendid professions of Radicalism, his fine dashing manners, and plenty of money for those whose votes stood in need of some gentle suasion, took the electors by storm, and Lamb, who seems to have regarded as an indignity the opposition sprung upon him, withdrew from the contest, Mr. Henry Bulwer, the late Lord Dalling, being prevailed upon to take his place. Duncombe, though he managed to have money to spend on bribery, was himself in debt, and had to conceal himself during the poll from the sheriff's men who were sent to find him. When the poll was over, his perils were at an end. He came in triumphantly, and stood protected by the privilege of Parliament. As for Lamb, his fate was deplorable. Forced to abandon the county, and driven ignominiously from the town, he tasted the full bitterness of retribution for his political sins, and fled for refuge to the solitudes of Derbyshire.

CHAPTER VII

CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND

Sudden turn of the political kaleidoscope—Canning in power—The Whig party rent asunder—Lamb Chief Secretary for Ireland, and a seat found for im—Leaves for Ireland—Death of Canning—Lamb's Irish achievements and experiences—Retains office under the Duke of Wellington and pays dearly for it—The Whigs cleared out—Huskisson's resignation and its consequences—Lamb secedes with the rest of the Canningites—Death of Viscount Melbourne.

WHILE Lamb was endeavouring to find consolation in books and in social pleasures for his exile from the House of Commons, a great change took place in the state of public affairs. On January 27, 1827, the Duke of York died. It was an event of some importance, for though personally insignificant, he was heir-presumptive to the Crown, and the coincidence of his opinions on the Catholic question with those of a decaying but still powerful party, rendered him something more than a political cipher. Henceforth the friends of religious freedom would have only one royal obstructive to deal with instead of two. This event was soon followed by another of much greater importance. On February 17, Lord Liverpool was disabled by a paralytic seizure, and the certainty of his speedy resignation raised the question of the successorship. Personal rivalries gave a false aspect to the issue. It seemed to be one between men, but it was really one between policies. There was no

immediate prospect of any great legislative change, but two divergent tendencies were struggling for ascendency in the Government, and the point to be settled was which of them should prevail.

On one side stood the champions of stern unyielding Toryism, of which Eldon was the purest type. Next to him in the tenacity of his opinions came Wellington, whose political sentiments were hardened and made combative rather by the instincts of his profession than by any force of intellectual conviction. To them Peel lent the aid of practical statesmanship. His mind was far more open than theirs to the influences of the new era upon which the world had entered. It was more plastic, more accommodating, more opportunist, and had in it some affinity with Canning's; but political possibilities and chances had to be considered, and the combination most favourable to those personal aims of which no politician can entirely divest himself, was that which made him the spokesman of the Tories. Outside that combination, with Canning in the field before him, he could only expect to play a second part; remaining where he was, he might hope soon to play the first. Over against these Tories of pure blood stood Canning and Huskisson, Tories as well as their colleagues, but with a difference. Some tincture of Liberalism had been infused into their veins. They were opposed to Parliamentary reform, but they were in favour of Catholic emancipation, in continental politics their sympathies were on the side of freedom, and they were for relaxing the fetters on trade. For fifteen years these opposing tendencies had been gathering strength, but the influence of Lord Liverpool had been strong enough to enforce a compromise. Now that he was gone, the armistice came to an end. One of the two parties must prevail over

the other, and which it should be depended, for the present at least, upon the King's choice of a premier.

The royal will settled the question in favour of Canning. By what motives the decision was swayed, whether any inducements were offered or any pledges exacted, has been the subject of much controversy; but the facts as we know them supply a sufficient explanation. Canning had much the advantage of his rivals in point of address. His mellifluous tongue could charm in private as well as in the House of Commons. He was charged with being obsequious to the King, and at this supreme moment, when a long cherished ambition had a promise of being fulfilled, he was not likely to err on the side of intractability. It is improbable, notwithstanding the King's assertion to the contrary, that pledges as to future policy were exacted or given; but the King was fully persuaded that the new Premier would not trouble him with the question of Catholic Emancipation. Wellington had not Canning's attractive ways. He took his military manners with him into the royal closet, and was proud of being able on critical occasions to bring the King to terms. The rumour at the time was that Wellington and Peel had given some offence to the King touching his prerogative. They were by far the stronger party in the Cabinet, and they probably pressed their claims with too little deference. As between the rival claimants, too much need not be made of their political differences. Canning's case was clear. The Catholic question apart, there was no one who could fairly be put in competition with him. He knew his pretensions were good, and he stood by them. If he could not be first he was determined not to be second, and this resolution made his opponents equally resolute. As between them it was a per-

sonal question, and when Canning carried it with the King they resolved that he should have the stage all to himself.

Accordingly, he was no sooner appointed than Wellington, Peel, Westmoreland, Bathurst, Melville, and Bexley all resigned, and Canning had to turn to the Whigs for help. From whatever point of view the question might be regarded, it was not an easy one for them. On the one hand there was the chance of office, always of some weight with politicians who have long been sitting in the shade. There was the further consideration that if they declined the overtures now made to them Canning would be compelled to abandon his task, and the party of reaction would be installed in power. How could they best promote their principles—by standing aloof, or by joining the Cabinet and helping to mould its policy? On the other hand there was the certainty that Catholic Emancipation, to which they were pledged up to the hilt, would have to remain in abeyance with their consent, and that they must also consent for the present not to bring forward any measure of Parliamentary reform. The result was a rent in the party. The great Whig houses took opposite sides. Lord Lansdowne joined the Government, while Earl Grey rejected the overtures with disdain, and assailed Canning himself with bitter animosity. The same families were divided. Lord Spencer went to the House of Lords expressly to avow his adhesion to the Government, while Lord Althorp in the Commons took the same side as Earl Grey. In the Russell family the attitude of the elder and the younger members was just the reverse. The Duke of Bedford angrily denounced the coalition, while his two sons, Lord Tavistock and Lord John Russell, gave it their warm support. Lord John himself, says his biographer, declared that he was 'too happy'

to see Mr. Canning in office free from the restrictions of Tory support 'to wish to moot against him the necessity of Parliamentary reform.' Brougham, Tierney, Duncannon, and Sir Francis Burdett had been the first to take action with their party on the same side, and it was upon them that the sterner or the more aristocratic Whigs who disdained all compromise, and perhaps disdained 'adventurers' still more, threw the responsibility for the disruption which ensued.

In the distribution of offices William Lamb was not forgotten. He was favourably known to Canning, and he stood in a more or less intimate connection with a number of influential people whom it was the minister's interest to conciliate. He had, moreover, a warm friend in Mr. Huskisson, who was one of Canning's most trusted colleagues. Things had greatly changed with Huskisson since the time when his marriage brought him within the fashionable circle of Melbourne House, and Lamb used to gently chaff him at dinner in the benevolent hope of assisting him to get rid of his awkward manners. His untiring industry, his mastery of finance, his wide knowledge of commercial subjects, and his enlightened policy in legislation affecting them, had recommended him to Canning as a valuable ally. It was at Canning's instance that a place was found for him in Lord Liverpool's administration as President of the Board of Trade, and it was at Canning's further instance that he was taken into the Cabinet a little later. Of the men who composed the Liverpool and Canning administrations, Huskisson is the only one, next to the chiefs themselves, whom the present generation cares to remember. He was the originator of the reciprocity system, which was a vast improvement on our former practice, while it had the further

merit, by the experience we were enabled to gather of its insufficiency, of preparing the way for free trade. Huskisson was the most useful man on the Treasury bench, and next in influence to Canning. Of course he remembered Lamb, whose hopes and hitherto foiled ambition and ardent discipleship to Canning he must have known. While Lord Liverpool was in power he had been enabled to offer him a subordinate post in the administration; but though Lamb was gratified by the offer, and knew how to speak of it to his friends, he had hardly the courage to go over to the Government benches by himself. Things were different now. The Whig party was split asunder, and one half of them were trooping to the ministerial camp. When Brougham, who had taunted Lamb with apostasy, was the first to challenge the support of his party for the new Premier, there was no longer any reason for hesitation. But Lamb did not go over as a Whig, though he sheltered himself under Whig example. He had long been a political Nicodemus. All he did now for the first time was to act on his opinions by taking office.

A seat had to be found for Lamb, and on the spur of the moment it was easily arranged. Canning had vacated his seat for Newport on accepting office as premier, but the borough was largely under Tory influences, and he did not venture to go back for re-election. Lamb, who would run less risk, was therefore nominated in his place, and returned by a small majority. There was some talk of a petition, but, before it could be presented, the seat was again vacated by his own acceptance of office, and not caring to face the formidable opposition with which he was threatened, he took refuge in the borough of Bletchingley, where one of the sitting members retired to make room for him. When pre-

sented to kiss hands on his appointment, the King was particularly gracious. On his name being first mentioned for office, the King had said to Canning, 'William Lamb, William Lamb—put him anywhere you like.' They were old acquaintances, there could not but be some surviving recollections of evening revels at Melbourne House, and the King was good-natured enough to bestow warm felicitations on the son of one who for more than thirty years had held a place in his household. The post assigned to Lamb was that of Chief Secretary for Ireland. We have learned to associate a degree of importance with that office which it did not then possess. The Lord Lieutenant was in communication with the Prime Minister on matters of general policy, and the Chief Secretary, to whom the management of details was entrusted, was really a subordinate of the Home Office. The Under-Secretary for the Home Department was practically the administrator of Irish affairs, and it was some relief to Lamb, who knew but little about Ireland, that this office was bestowed upon Mr. Spring Rice. He, at any rate, knew a great deal more. Lamb received his appointment in May, but he was in no hurry to depart, and did not leave for Dublin till July 4. His wife of course was left at Brocket, but he took his son with him, trusting that the change might help to rouse his slumbering faculties.

But events were travelling fast. Lamb had been barely a month in Dublin, when the news reached him of Canning's death. The fatal issue was hardly unexpected, though it was a shock to all that it should come so soon. Nothing could be more dramatic or more sad. Premier on April 10, dead on August 8; the highest object of his ambition no sooner grasped than lost. His health had long been fail-

ing, and he never quite recovered from a cold he caught at the funeral of the Duke of York, when he and the other ministers, near midnight, and in the depth of winter, were kept standing for two hours on the cold flagstones of St. George's Chapel. He told Lord Eldon to stand on his cocked hat, but he took no such care of himself. In February he was so ill that it seemed doubtful whether he would recover. His energies were roused by the struggle for the premiership, and the fierce debates which followed may almost be said to have kept him alive, but the strain only made a speedy collapse more certain. When Parliament broke up on July 2, he went to Chiswick on the invitation of the Duke of Devonshire, and there, a month later, he breathed his last in the same room where Fox expired.

The transfer of the premiership to Lord Goderich did not affect Lamb's position. It was understood that the policy of the Government would remain unaltered. The bark had been newly rigged and manned, and it was to proceed on its voyage, although it had lost its pilot and the steam-power had been cut off. There was a partial reconstruction of the ministry. Lord Lansdowne succeeded Mr. Sturges Bourne at the Home Office, and Mr. Huskisson became Secretary of State for the Colonies. He ought to have been Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the office is said to have been pressed upon him, but he had probably good reasons for declining. An economist and reformer in command at the Treasury would hardly have been acceptable to the King, who asserted his right to choose his own ministers. These changes cannot but have been agreeable to Lamb. They helped at any rate to make him feel more at home among his new friends.

We must now follow him to Dublin and see how he

acquitted himself there. It is needless to say that he did not set the Liffey on fire. He soon found out how little any man could do, though equipped with an official title and animated with the best intentions. The administrative system over which he was supposed to have some rights of direction and control turned out on a closer inspection to have a separate existence of its own, and to be delightfully independent of the gentlemen who were sent over from England to take charge of its operations. The permanent officials were the real rulers of the country. They knew their business, they were entrenched behind a mass of venerable traditions, which had the force of unwritten laws, and which they held that nobody in his senses would dream of violating. They were armed with precedents at all points. One thing could not be done because it had never been done before. Something else could not be done because it depended upon something else which had a prescriptive right to be let alone. It seemed practically impossible to change anything without changing everything. If a single brick were meddled with, the whole fabric might be expected to tumble in ruins. Hence, as the edifice existed by a sacred tenure, no innovation of any kind could be permitted. Lamb used his eyes and ears without stint. He was ready to listen to any one who had a story to tell. He pushed his inquiries into all corners with the curiosity of a novice and the zeal of a reformer, and when he had found an undoubted grievance he would ask, perhaps with some mild expletive which gave relief to his indignation, why on earth it could not be redressed. He was of course treated with official deference, but the experts would shake their heads and soon envelope the question with a cloud of difficulties not one of which, utter ignoramus as he was in

the conditions of Irish life and in the details of administration, did he see his way to solve. They were patient with him to his face, but they made amends for their silence as soon as his back was turned. He had perhaps some reason for fancying them, when he was out of sight and hearing, exchanging satirical observations and looks of derision at his expense, wondering at the vanity of these imported wiseacres, who imagined that, because they had got a post and a salary on the Irish establishment, it was their business to upset everything. A few experiences of this kind taught Lamb the length of his tether, and he soon resigned himself to make a virtue of necessity at the easy cost of doing nothing.

He had other difficulties to encounter. The duties of his office were ill-defined. He was responsible, but he did not exactly know to whom, and he was wholly without power He could not act except with the approval and under the virtual direction of the Lord Lieutenant. But the Marquis of Wellesley did not care to exert himself about anything. He had been six years in office, and was now longing impatiently for the moment when he could leave it. The hopes with which he entered upon his Viceregal mission had been cruelly disappointed. Trusting to be able to win the confidence of all classes by kind and impartial treatment, he found himself compelled soon after his arrival to ask for an Insurrection Act. The Catholic Association had grown up under his eyes. He obtained an Act for its suppression, but O'Connell boasted that he would drive a coach-and-six through its provisions, and he had fulfilled his threat. His Majesty's representative had the semblance of power, but the reality lay in other hands. The Marquis had not the freshness of his colleague, and did not share in his appetite

for work. At the same time he did not like to be passed over. Lamb had to remember that he was a subordinate, and must not take upon himself too much. When letters were sent to him from the Home Office asking for his opinion on some Irish question, he knew that it would be best to return them in order that the request might be addressed through him to his chief. The transitional character of the Government favoured a paralysis of administration in Ireland. It could not last long, that was certain, and there was a natural disposition to wait to see what the next would be. Perhaps something might happen which would bring the Catholic claims to the front, and extort a recognition of them from the King, whose obstinate prejudices were the only real obstacle to emancipation. In that case the Marquis would be well content to reign a little longer at the Castle. For the present he resigned himself to apathy and indifference, the silent and helpless brood of despair.

It was considered one of the duties of the Chief Secretary to prepare the Irish measures which might be needed for the following session, and a letter which Lamb addressed to Lord Lansdowne on this subject will enable us to form some idea of his powers of initiation, and of the difficulties he met with in any attempt to improve the law. The letter is in reply to one from Lord Lansdowne, in which nine different subjects are enumerated as requiring attention. Lamb is no doubt thankful for the suggestions, though perhaps half ashamed that he should have to be indebted for them to an official at Whitehall, while with some of them he is extremely puzzled. In his reply he begins by mentioning four measures which he has actually thought of himself, and three of which are ready for presentation. But two of them, a Jury Bill, and a General Paving and

Lighting Bill, had been brought into Parliament during the previous session and left over. The third, a Bill for the renewal of the Insolvent Act, had been left by his predecessor, Mr. Goulburn, in a complete state of preparation. The fourth was a Bill for the Amendment of the Criminal Law, and the prevention of malicious outrages, one of a class which the Castle officials were sure not to overlook. Having so far vindicated the forethought of the Lord Lieutenant and himself, he passes in review the nine other topics which the Home Secretary commends to his consideration. He admits the desirableness of introducing some order into the statutes relating to public works, their present state being so confused that he has to own himself unable to understand them ; there should at least be some provision for the methodical execution of such works, and for a frequent and strict audit of the expenditure. A Bill for amending the Civil Bill Process is under consideration, so also is a Bill for reforming the abuses reported as existing in the office for the Registration of Deeds. Tolls and customs are a large and delicate question upon which he has to confess himself uninformed, but attention shall be paid to it. As regards Grand Jury presentments, 'it is unnecessary to expatiate on the magnitude, the importance, and the difficulty of this subject.' Plans of reformation may be suggested by others, but it would only be deceiving his correspondent at the Home Office and subjecting himself to the charge of presumption if he held out any hope of being himself prepared to bring forward any general measure in the next Parliament. The state of the magistracy in both countries requires serious consideration, and will soon press itself, he is convinced, on the attention of the Legislature, but not at present, it would seem, upon his own. The Tithe Composition

Act of 1823 has been carried into effect in 940 parishes out of 2,600. It would no doubt be highly beneficial to establish a more permanent system, but the existing one is working pretty well and had better perhaps be let alone. There are no doubt abuses connected with the appointment of sheriffs, but 'those who are best informed on the subject' conceive that it is impossible to remedy them without running the risk of introducing others quite as bad. The question of education is far too large for incidental discussion. It is one of 'great delicacy and difficulty.' Still, it has received, and will receive, 'the most anxious consideration on the part of the Lord Lieutenant.' This is the legislative budget for the year in a tentative stage. It shows us the machine in motion. We see the official brain at work, and are perhaps surprised at the tutorial functions assumed by the Home Office. In reply to this letter Lord Lansdowne assures Lamb that while he feels it his duty to dwell occasionally on points connected with local administration in Ireland, he feels persuaded that they have not been overlooked, and that Lord Wellesley and himself are best able to judge of the difficulties attending any efforts to remedy the defects of the present system. An outside observer might perhaps infer that in Lord Lansdowne's opinion both master and man at Dublin wanted keeping up to the mark, and that the hints conveyed to them might almost be construed as a reprimand.

There was other work in which Lamb was more in his element. He liked to talk—and few men could talk better. He cared nothing for the pomp and circumstance of official life, and the restraints of etiquette he was apt to resent as a bore. There was that in him which is sometimes wanting in persons who can declaim at large upon the rights of man,

and who profess to be democrats of the purest water, a sense of equality and fellowship with all around him. There is some risk in saying that he was a gentleman, the word has come to be so much abused, but he had all the attributes of thorough manliness. He never stood upon his dignity; perhaps he would have been unable to conceive the necessity of such a severe proceeding, for he was always at the bottom of his heart urbane and kind and good, and all that unconscious dignity implies was wrought into his nature. Bluff manners, and the bluff speech in which he sometimes indulged, sat upon him as a foil, illustrating but never long concealing his amiable qualities. He liked to come to close quarters with the people he met, so as to get at their thoughts and let them get at as much of his as he was not bound to conceal, though even that occasionally came out. A fairer minded man, or one more utterly free from all taint of bigotry or of class prejudices, never entered Dublin Castle. He no doubt did much good as Chief Secretary by the genial spirit he breathed, but he would probably have done even more good if he had been sent on his travels through Ireland, with the simple commission to talk to everybody he met, whether peer or priest or peasant. It is certain that he would have left behind him wherever he went an atmosphere of tolerance and goodwill.

He did this in Dublin as far as a liberal interpretation of his official duties would permit. He sought out opportunities for conversation with representatives of the popular party. Mr. Torrens relates one such interview which he had with Shiel, from whom he learned more of the state of the country in half an hour than he would have extracted from a hundredweight of official reports. He was made to understand the difference which the Irish peasant always

sees between agrarian and ordinary crime. The land question and the tithe question were presented to him in the lurid light of real life, with instances of lawless redress at the cost of the unfortunate process-server and small proprietor. 'And why don't they go at the big ones?' asked Lamb. Most were absentees, was the reply, and the rest they did 'go at' when they got the chance. There was a landlord in Tipperary who went by the name of the Woodcock, because he was so hard to hit. Lamb took his deputations in hand in the same style. He would draw them out; he would hear everything they had to say; perhaps banter them a little to keep them in good humour, and send them away well pleased on the whole with him and still more with themselves. The truth is that Lamb had a great deal of the Irishman in him—the same free and easy manners, the same glow of humour and the same inbred courtesy. That he was popular there can be no question. He even stole into the good graces of O'Connell, and there was some talk of putting him up for Dublin.

In the experience of his official life he met with many things that amused and surprised him. He found that Dublin had its 'kept' newspapers. The Government advertisements were given exclusively to certain journals, and as proclamations were frequent and lengthy they were a valuable source of income. Of course, an equivalent was given, but the advocacy which was supposed to repay the patronage limited the circulation. Lamb thought the arrangement costly and useless. He was for abolishing the advertisements and requiring the papers to publish Government notices gratis. He found nobody to favour his proposal. Even Plunket laughed at him. Then he had

reason to believe that things were not quite as they should be at the Post Office. In former days the Government used to open letters for their own purposes—and perhaps did so still occasionally. The officials naturally thought that they might follow the example on their own behoof. An Orange postmaster, or an applicant for patronage who found means to enlist that official's services, might often like to know what was passing between the Chief Secretary and the authorities in London. The Under-Secretary at the Home Office felt persuaded that the letters sent to him had been opened. The danger was all the greater because Lamb wrote freely, sometimes using epithets and favourite expletives, which would not be agreeable reading for those to whose names they were attached. On one occasion, when it happened to be the name of a lady engaged in some patronage hunt, Lamb was terrified at the suggestion, made perhaps to frighten him, that his letter might have passed under the lady's eyes. The patronage hunters were a constant source of annoyance. People of position fancied that everything was to be had for the asking. Peers, bishops, squires, and parsons, all were playing the same game. Posts under Government, berths in the customs or excise, next presentations, all were so much game that had to be run down. Nobody dreamed of such a thing as merit. All sense of public duty seemed to be extinct. Corruption flowed through a hundred mean and petty channels, and every refusal meant reprisals somewhere. The social peculiarities of Ireland had to be borne in mind in amending the laws, since what seemed desirable on the score of simplicity might turn out mischievous in practice. In Ireland coroners and sheriffs had always had concurrent powers in execution of civil process. Just before Lamb's

time, Dick Martin, as Mr. Spring Rice calls him, an Irish gentleman well known for his humanity and impecuniosity, had prevailed upon Goulburn to pass a measure abolishing the powers of the coroner, on the plea of assimilating the laws of the two countries. The result was not foreseen, though it was probably clear enough to Mr. Martin. The difficulty of recovering debts was augmented ten-fold, and there was an official recommendation to return to the former practice. On a rumour to this effect getting abroad, 'a magistrate and a grand juror, a late high employé of the Government and a near relation of a noble friend of yours and mine, wrote to Mr. Spring Rice to ask whether it was true. Have the goodness to drop me a line to say if this is to be the case, for if it be so all poor gentlemen who happen to be in difficulties must fly the country. God forbid that it should be so!'

It has been said that Lamb did not do much in Ireland, and there is, of course, some truth in the observation. But no man in his position could have done much, and probably no man could have done more than he did in the same time and with no greater opportunities. One thing at any rate he did which remains as a slight but enduring memorial of his administration. He gave an example of the spirit in which Ireland should be governed. A hitherto proscribed party and persecuted race felt that they had a friend in him. If all our relations to Ireland, legislative and administrative, could by some miracle have been brought into harmony with the just and benign sentiments with which he was inspired, we should have been spared years of agitation, and events might have taken a different course. He stayed long enough in Ireland to witness the final gathering and concentration of those popular forces

which were soon to bear down all resistance. On January 13, 1828, the Catholics throughout Ireland assembled at the same hour in their chapels to send up their prayers to Heaven for deliverance from an oppressive law which deprived them of the common rights of citizenship because of their creed. The call to devotion reverberated all over the land, and six millions of people fell on their knees. It was a function in which patriotism and religion were combined, and the circumstances which occasioned the demonstration also brought Lamb's mission to an end.

Lord Goderich had proved himself unequal to the task he had undertaken. He had been surprised into taking office on an emergency for which everybody was unprepared. Since then there had been time for reflection. The King was no longer in the same mood. He had forgotten the little pique in the matter of the royal prerogative which had led him to prefer Canning to Wellington and Peel. A Tory in all his later sympathies, and much exercised in his sensitive conscience on the Catholic question, he was anxious to bring the Tories back to power. On the other hand the Cabinet needed strengthening, and, as parties stood, this was only possible by a further infusion of the Whig element which would have made it still less acceptable. At this juncture a letter from Lord Goderich proposing the addition of Lords Holland and Wellesley to the Cabinet, but at the same time regretting that domestic circumstances occasionally prevented him from discharging his official duties, gave the King the opportunity for which he had been watching. Lord Goderich was relieved of his burden, and the Duke of Wellington received the King's command to form a Government.

Ireland was naturally among the preoccupations of the

new premier. The news of his appointment had thrown the Catholics into a ferment, and occasioned the impressive demonstration of January 13. Actuated by strategical as well as by pious motives, they had sought a refuge in prayer. It must have been an object with the Duke to calm their excitement, and this view would be best promoted by keeping Lamb at his post. Accordingly the Duke wrote to him expressing a hope that he would remain, and Lamb on his part desired nothing better. But before he could give his consent there were scruples that had to be considered. He had gone back some paces when he accepted office under Canning, but it would be a long stride still further backwards if he cast in his lot with a Tory administration pure and simple. Some of his colleagues were in the same dilemma, and, before deciding, he thought it prudent to see what they meant to do.

With this view he left Dublin on January 23, and as events turned out he did not return. On reaching London he found things even worse than he perhaps expected. The Whigs who joined Canning were not included in the ministerial arrangements. The Duke had not passed the compliment of inviting them to stay. Among those who were left outside were Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Spring Rice, with whom Lamb had been in daily communication for the previous six months. On the other hand, Palmerston, Grant, and Dudley, with all of whom he was on terms of intimacy, had been asked to remain, and the invitation had even been extended to Huskisson. It was probably this last circumstance that determined Lamb. He saw no good reason why he should sever himself from a relative with whose principles he was in full accord, and whose influential position in the ministry would give to it some

tincture of Liberalism. Nevertheless, it completed his rupture with the Whigs, and it was a step for which he had soon to pay dear.

The first sacrifice exacted of him was to vote in opposition to one of his strongest convictions. No man living was more tolerant than Lamb; no man was more deeply penetrated with a sense of what was just and right and fair, as between different sections of the community, and if it had fallen to his lot to move the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, he would have undertaken the task with the liveliest satisfaction. But when Lord John Russell brought in a Bill for this purpose in the session of 1828, Lamb had to vote against it. He had only just accepted the Government shilling, and it was too soon to turn tail. Perhaps the sacrifice was less hard and less inconsistent with his principles than might be supposed. He had an old prejudice against Dissenters. To the surprise of all parties, and not least of Lord John himself, the Government were defeated by a majority of 44, and Peel, finding that they had been abandoned by many of their own supporters, announced that no further opposition would be offered to the Bill. To be a Tory was bad enough, but to be beaten by Tories on a question of civil and religious liberty was unexpected ignominy, and Lamb must have felt his position acutely.

But a more serious crisis was approaching. The question on which it occurred looks insignificant to us now, though it was then regarded as of vast importance, and the division of opinion it created almost rent the Government to its foundations. The boroughs of Penryn and East Retford had been found guilty of shameful corruption, and it was agreed that they should be disfranchised. But there was a

difficulty as to what should be done with the seats. Part of the Cabinet were for throwing both places into their respective hundreds, and so keeping both seats for the counties; another part were for transferring the seats to two of the great towns which were then unrepresented, Manchester and Birmingham being the towns named; while still another were for a compromise, throwing one of the places into the hundreds and giving the seats of the other to a town, and this plan was finally adopted. The Bill for Penryn, providing for the transfer of the seats to Manchester, passed the House first, and was sent to the Lords. The Bill for East Retford was kept back in the Commons till it should be seen what the Lords did with the Penryn Bill. The Government were divided on the question; but Peel, who acted for the Duke of Wellington as well as for himself, meant, in any case, to vote for throwing East Retford into the hundred of Bassetlaw, while Huskisson adhered to the view he had declared all along, that if one of the places was thrown into the hundred, the seats for the other should be transferred to a large town. By the time the East Retford Bill came to be dealt with, it was certain that the Lords would not agree to transfer the seats to Manchester. That being the case, Huskisson held that his course was clear. He could not vote for throwing East Retford into the hundred, and in the division he and Peel took opposite sides. Palmerston and Grant voted with Huskisson, so that there was a pretty large rent in the Government mantle. The affair might have blown over but for the course which Huskisson thought it his duty to take. On going home after the division, he wrote a note to the Duke tendering his resignation, and received a reply the next morning in which the Duke informed him that he had laid his letter

before the King. Palmerston interposed with the Duke, urging that Huskisson did not wish to resign, but merely offered to resign if his resignation should be thought necessary. Huskisson also wrote an explanatory letter to the same effect. But the Duke, blind to consequences, wanted to get rid of Huskisson, and refused to consider his first letter as anything else than an unconditional resignation. Huskisson being thus declared out, as the Duke alleged, by his own act, Palmerston, Dudley, Grant, and Lamb at once resigned. Lamb had voted with the Government, and was not obliged to resign, but he decided to go with his friends. Too good for the Tories, and not yet qualified for admission, or, in Lamb's case, for re-admission, into the true church where Grey, and Althorp, and Russell were the ministering hierophants, the followers of Canning formed, for a time, a group by themselves. 'Our party,' says Lord Palmerston in his diary, 'though small, is very respectable.' It consisted of about eleven peers and twenty-seven members of the House of Commons, and among them Lamb henceforth occupies a conspicuous place.

By this time Lamb was no longer a commoner. His father died on July 22, 1828, in his eighty-third year. In the previous January he had sustained another loss—for a loss it was, and deeply felt, notwithstanding the painful memories which it wound up and consummated. On his return from Ireland he was summoned to his wife's bedside, and a few days after his arrival she breathed her last. During his six months' absence they had regularly corresponded with each other. The old alienation had disappeared, and the fondness of old days had seemed to come back. After storms and whirlwinds the wearied heart had sunk exhausted into repose, and there was a tranquil setting.

His home was now desolate. Only his son remained, affording him the solace of pity and grief. His father's death, by giving him succession to a peerage, had an important effect upon his political prospects. He was but ill-suited to the atmosphere of the House of Commons, where the prize of victory is won not without dust and heat, and if he had remained there he never could have attained to the position which proved to be in store for him. In another place his mild eloquence might spend its charms upon a more patient, a more respectful, perhaps a more appreciative audience, and it was even possible that turbulent rivals who could not yield to each other might agree to find shelter under a reputation which excited no envy, while it inspired affection and even respect.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE HOME OFFICE

Lamb, now Viscount Melbourne, in the House of Lords—Catholic Emancipation—Death of George IV.—The Administration on the shoals—A revolution in Paris, and a threatened one at home—The Duke is afraid to visit the City—The Canningites declare for Parliamentary Reform and prepare to join the Whigs—Melbourne moves with them, but slowly—Earl Grey in power—Melbourne Home Secretary—The Reform Bill—Melbourne's mind quite made up—Work at the Home Office—Mr. Thomas Young and Mr. Francis Place.

WHEN Parliament met in February 1829, Lamb took his seat in the House of Lords as Viscount Melbourne, and we are at length enabled to speak of him under the designation with which his political career is chiefly associated. He was now fifty years of age, and he had been for twenty-five years a member of the House of Commons, but to the country at large he was almost an unknown man. He had made no great speeches, he had done nothing to impress himself upon the imagination of the public, and if instead of going to the House of Lords he had disappeared at that moment from the scene of affairs, the world would hardly have remembered that he had lived at all. The change of rank and name coincided with a change in his own position. He was soon to float or to be forced into greater prominence. The country would learn before long that Lord Melbourne was a personage of some importance among the leading

politicians of the day. And the name which he now assumed for the first time is not likely to be forgotten while the English race endures. The historian centuries hence will have to explain that one of the most opulent and stately of Australian cities chose to call itself after the title of a distinguished peer who figured about this period in the annals of the mother country.

Lord Melbourne entered upon his duties in the Upper House at the beginning of a memorable crisis. The Government had been driven to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to offer a successful resistance to the Catholic claims. To this conclusion any Government must have been brought before long, but the crisis was precipitated by the course of events in Ireland. In the ministerial rearrangements rendered necessary by the secession of Mr. Huskisson and his friends, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, the member for County Clare, was appointed President of the Board of Trade, and had to go to his constituents for re-election. This gave an opportunity to the Catholic Association which the leaders were determined should not pass unimproved. No one imagined that there would be a contest, or if a contest were ventured upon that it would prove successful. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald was one of the most popular men in the county. The landlords could be trusted to stand by him, and their influence had hitherto been omnipotent. It had been the custom since the union to divide estates into excessively small holdings and to convey them on life leases. This gave the tenants the status of freeholders, and enabled them to vote under the forty-shilling franchise. If political freedom consisted in having votes, Ireland at that period was the land of freemen. In the course of a country walk almost every man you met was a voter. But the landlords

who manufactured the votes expected to have the use of them on the day of election, and the customary right of the Irish tenant to be always a year behind with his rent gave his landlord the whip-hand over him in politics. This is hardly a metaphor. It is said that on important occasions the forty-shilling freeholders were whipped to the poll. But on the occasion to which we are now referring, the greatest that had occurred since the franchise was conferred upon Catholics by 'Grattan's Parliament,' the landlords were powerless. Their power had passed into the hand of the priesthood, and when it was known that O'Connell meant to stand in opposition to Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald the call-to-arms went forth from every altar in Clare. The incidents of the contest would fill a volume. For once it was true that the eyes of the whole country were turned upon the spot where the electoral verdict was to be given. When the poll began Ennis was one great encampment, and when it was announced at the close that O'Connell had won by nearly two to one, it was felt that a revolution was accomplished.

The blow told at once upon the ministry. O'Connell could not sit in Parliament because he was a Catholic, but he had been returned in spite of his disability, and in due time he might be expected to present himself at the table of the House. He would of course refuse to take the oath in the prescribed form, and be ordered to retire; but could this be done without any promise of relief? If it could be done now, could it be done after the next election, when every county outside of Ulster would follow the example of Clare? The Duke of Wellington saw that it was time to surrender, and Peel, though still unconverted in point of principle, recognised the necessity of yielding to an over-

riding principle, the safety of the State. The ultra-Tories were furious when the secret leaked out. Lord Eldon at once mounted guard over the King's conscience, and Wellington made preparations as if for another siege of Badajos. The royal conscience refused to yield, and had to be taken by storm. The Duke assured his Majesty that the alternative was civil war. Then at last he yielded, but after yielding he withdrew his word, and the Duke resigned. Then finally came an absolute surrender, which was put into writing so as to be beyond the reach of repudiation, and the struggle was at an end. With Parliament the Government had an easy task. Their Tory following combined with the Canningites, and the regular Whig opposition ensured a decisive majority in both Houses. Before the Relief Bill was introduced a Bill was passed for putting down the Catholic Association, and a supplementary measure was passed afterwards for disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders. This potent weapon, having fallen from the landlords' hands, could not be left in the grasp of the priesthood.

Melbourne spoke only once in the debates on these measures, and that merely to defend the previous Governments of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning from censure in not having applied to Parliament for fresh powers when the former Act suppressing the Catholic Association was driven through by O'Connell's coach-and-six. It was a word on behalf of those with whom he had acted, and also on his own, since as an ex-Chief Secretary he was included in the censure. For the measures themselves he had nothing but approval. The disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders fell in with his views, though Huskisson and Palmerston were among those who opposed it in the other House. We fear it must be said that he who had once been

a Whig, and could remember a time when he was full of enthusiasm for Fox, was now more lukewarm in his Liberalism than his two friends who had served in Tory administrations for a quarter of a century. The wrench of separation had been greater with them than with him, and when once they had parted with their old associates they took a longer stride in advance. They were perhaps more keen-sighted. They were men of practical instincts, less given than Melbourne to half moody, half mystical musing, and moved in a more luminous atmosphere. They saw clearly what was coming. The party of resistance was broken up, and new combinations were on the cards. The Government had weakened itself by passing the great measure which now sheds upon it a flickering renown. By their sudden change on the Catholic question they had spread confusion through the Tory camp. The staunch old Tories who had sworn by Lord Eldon stood aloof, willing to strike and wound them if they could, and eager to stir up any question which would be likely to embarrass them. In this position the Duke would have been only too glad to welcome back his semi-Liberal allies whom he had cleared out of the Cabinet with so much gusto a year before. But it was too late to hope for success in that direction. The Canningites were carried by force of circumstances with which their own political development kept pace to the side of the Whigs who had with them the promise of the future, and the Government could only float helplessly down the stream, apprehensive of a fate which was not long in coming.

On June 25, 1830, George IV. died and William IV. ascended the throne. A month later a revolution broke out in Paris, and Charles X. was on his way to Holyrood. There was a sinister resemblance between the political

situations of the two countries. At the beginning of an eventful week reactionary ministries were in power in Paris and Westminster. By the end of the week one was overthrown by a popular uprising, and the other remained standing, or rather shaking. It is not surprising that there should have been a strong impulse here to finish the comparison. The moment for completing it seemed to have arrived, when on November 9 the King was dissuaded by his ministers from going to the Lord Mayor's banquet at Guildhall, on the ground that if he went there might be such a disturbance of the peace as would compel a resort to military force. 'In regard to myself,' said the Duke, 'I have no desire to be massacred, which would have happened. I would have gone if the law had been equal to protect me, but that was not the case.' The Duke had dimly seen for some time past that the Government could not go on as it was. Melbourne and Palmerston seem to us now but feeble folk for such an emergency, but the Duke had made overtures to both. Would they come back, and on what terms? They both gave substantially the same answer. They would not come alone; if they came they must bring with them Lord Lansdowne and Earl Grey. The Duke was ready to welcome any or all of them but Earl Grey, whom he could not imagine without a Reform Bill in his pocket. When Palmerston had given his reply he went to Paris to escape further importunities, but they were renewed when he came back. The signal for the final break-up was given by Brougham at the end of October, when he announced his intention on that day fortnight to bring the question of Parliamentary Reform before the House. The day before his motion could come on, the Government were defeated on Sir Henry Parnell's motion for a committee of inquiry

into the Civil List; the next day they resigned and Earl Grey was sent for. Lord Palmerston says in his autobiographical sketch: 'Melbourne, the two Grants, Binning, Littleton, Graham, Warrender, Denison, and one or two others, had met at my house a few days before to consider what we should do on the motion which Brougham was to make in favour of Parliamentary Reform, and I and the Grants and Littleton had quite determined to vote for it.' Melbourne does not appear to have then made up his mind, but a conclusion was soon forced upon him. Poor Huskisson, who would have had no hesitation, was no longer one of their number. He had been killed two months before by the railway accident at Parkside.

On accepting the King's command to form a ministry, Earl Grey sent at once for Lord Palmerston, through whom the adhesion of the Canningite group was easily secured. They were willing to be won, more willing even than Earl Grey was to make the necessary overtures. Earl Grey had never liked Canning, and he had as little liking for his followers, especially for those who had gone over to him from the Whig party. But he was now obliged to accept them as his friends, and their co-operation was invaluable. Lord Palmerston offered himself for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer with the leadership of the House, but he was told that this post was reserved for Lord Althorp. His next choice was the Foreign Office, for which indeed he had special aptitudes, and the Home Office was bestowed upon Lord Melbourne. Lord John Russell had earned a place in the Cabinet, but he was for the present to be content with an outside appointment as Paymaster of the Forces. As for Brougham, imperious, self-willed, unfit for rule, too turbulent to obey, and too powerful through his

influence with the country to be disregarded, the one desire of those whom he would fain have for colleagues was to get him out of the House of Commons. He demanded the Lord Chancellorship as the price of his services, and the request could not be refused. Sir James Graham was made First Lord of the Admiralty, the Marquis of Anglesea returned to Ireland, with Mr. Stanley, the late Lord Derby, as his Chief Secretary. This was the principal cast for the drama to be played during the next three years, and for the longer drama which was to last to the end of Lord Melbourne's career. With the persons just named he was henceforth to be intimately associated.

When Parliament met on February 3, 1831, a Reform Bill was announced for March 1, when a struggle began of unprecedented interest, which was not brought to a close till the end of the following year. But Melbourne had to begin work at once. He had been installed at the Home Office in the previous December, and the two years during which his colleagues were employed in piloting the Reform Bill through both Houses covered the busiest period of his administration. The prominence given to the reform debates has occasioned him some injustice. The extreme difficulty of the task which fell to his share has been in some measure overlooked. While Althorp and Russell were making speeches which were re-echoed through the country day after day, Melbourne had to do his best to maintain 'law and order.' He was at his desk from morning to night, reading the reports which poured in from the local authorities from one end of the kingdom to the other, taking counsel with those who were best able to advise him, and devising measures for dealing with emergencies as fast as they arose. Here we encounter a difficulty which it is not

easy to overcome. Those who have not looked into the history of that period can have but a faint conception of the state of things which prevailed. It is only sixty years ago, but by any political or social measurement the interval might almost be one of centuries. It is hard to persuade ourselves that the Duke of Wellington did not speak with great extravagance when he talked of the probability of his being massacred if he went to the banquet at Guildhall, and there was no doubt an undue tendency to panic in the public mind. But the aspect of the country was enough to alarm the coolest observers. Popular outbreaks were considered probable, and even imminent, in many of our large towns, while the agricultural counties were seething with discontent. In the manufacturing districts of the north, multitudes were without employment, and the wages of those who could get a little work to do were at the lowest ebb. The method adopted to remedy this evil was to attack the factories, break the machinery, and force the workpeople into the streets in order to overcome what was regarded as the obstinate determination of the employers not to pay higher wages. It seemed to be clear that inventions which enabled one man to do the work of ten were adverse to the interests of labour, and that the capitalists who used them were the enemies of the working classes. Funds were raised in spite of the poverty of the contributors, and plans were secretly devised which threatened at any moment to break out in open violence. In the agricultural districts, especially in the south, things were even worse. Farm labourers went about in masses of hundreds or thousands at a time, demanding bread, pillaging the farmhouses, breaking machines, and spreading havoc and terror through whole counties. The rural population seemed to make

themselves willing agents of a widespread and inscrutable conspiracy. A farmer woke up at night to find that his rickyards were on fire, while the people about him gave no help and showed no sympathy. A mysterious personage, known only by the name of 'Swing,' issued his mandate, and the food for want of which the poor were starving went up in smoke and flame.

Such was the state of things with which Melbourne had to cope the moment he entered upon his duties at the Home Office, and there can be no doubt that he showed himself a capable and energetic administrator. 'He has surprised all about him,' says Greville, 'by a sudden display of activity and vigour, rapid and diligent transaction of business, for which nobody was prepared.' Of his unwearied assiduity the letters published in the Melbourne Papers, 'selected,' we are told, 'from hundreds of a similar character,' afford ample evidence. He had difficulties with the magistracy in different parts of the country. Sometimes they refused to act; sometimes their action was too swift and inconsiderate; sometimes they pestered him about impracticable remedies, while they neglected to use those which were within their power. He found everywhere, among the influential classes, a strange indifference to co-operate with each other in repressing disorder. Jealousies prevailed between the industrial and the landed aristocracies which rendered both powerless. For the most part they preferred to look on with folded arms and appeal to the Home Office to do for them what they should have done for themselves. Nothing is more strange than the paralysis which seems to have fallen on society at that period. People were nerveless, despairing, smitten with a sense of helplessness, full of apprehensions of a dismal future, and in ill-humour with

everything. Melbourne had by turns to exhort, reprove, stimulate, and curb, giving all round the advice which seemed most suitable to the circumstances. He was in constant correspondence with the Duke of Wellington as to the disposition of the slender military forces at the disposal of the authorities. In Hampshire 'gangs of labourers, 1,500 strong, moved through the country, destroying machinery, burning farm-buildings, and levying contributions.' Acting in concert with the War Office, he marched troops into the disturbed districts. In December, a Special Commission sat at Winchester to try the rioters in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Herts, and Wiltshire, and 'no fewer than 1,000 individuals were brought to justice.'

But there was one thing which Melbourne was most reluctant to do, and another which he would not do under any circumstances. He was slow to engage in press prosecutions. He thought it better that opinion, even if violent, should have free expression, so long as there was no positive instigation to mischief. Carlile and Cobbett were exceptions; they fell under the ban. The former had a heavy sentence at the Old Bailey, but the latter got off through the jury failing to agree. The thing which he would not do was to employ informers. He reminded those who recommended this step of the shameful abuses which had resulted from the spy-system some fifteen years before, when the infamous Oliver, who was in the pay of the Home Office, betrayed a number of misguided victims to the gallows. A man named Comber was then undergoing a sentence of imprisonment in Brixton Gaol. A Sussex magistrate, Mr. Henry Drummond, represented him as an agent likely to be useful if Lord Melbourne would consent to employ him. He might ingratiate himself with the incendiaries and lead

them on till the time came for entrapping and hanging them. The magistrate was as disinterested as he was zealous. Comber might set the magistrate's own ricks on fire by way of a beginning. Mr. Henry Drummond was at that time much given, in concert with Edward Irving and other eminent divines, to the study of unfulfilled prophecy. The seventh or eighth vial which he proposed to pour out upon Sussex in the shape of the Brixton convict was allowed to remain undischarged of its contents. Melbourne read him a lecture. Referring to Jeremiah Brandreth and his fellow-victims, he wrote: 'I make no apology for bringing before you this view of the subject, as I am sure you must feel that, in our desire to discover the perpetrators of these most dangerous and atrocious acts, we should run as little risk as possible of involving innocent persons in accusations, and still less of adopting measures which may encourage the seduction of persons, now innocent, into the commission of crime?' The lecture is, perhaps, rather long-winded, but the sentiments do honour to him who uttered them.

After the first twelve months the strain at the Home Office abated for a time. Politics came in as a counter-irritant, and agitation in the social form it first assumed began to subside. There was not less suffering, but the people were more hopeful. They knew in a general way that it was proposed to make a great change in the composition of the House of Commons. If that change could be brought about, surely it would be possible to make good laws and get rid of the evils from which the nation suffered. Hence attention everywhere was fixed upon the Reform Bill. It became a symbol of hope to those who felt the pinch of want. By some process, not very clearly comprehended, it was to act as a universal remedy. Then there

was the joy which Reformers felt at the approaching realisation of the visions that had floated before their eyes for half a century. The ancient principles of the constitution were about to be vindicated; the people were at length to be reinstated in their rights, too long usurped by the aristocracy and the crown. In these circumstances public feeling was raised to a high pitch of excitement, and it was felt that if anything went wrong with the Bill serious events might happen.

It is needless to follow the fortunes of the Bill in the two Houses. The struggle will never cease to be one of the most important that have taken place in the whole course of our history, but its proportions are not quite the same to us as they were to the last generation, and the story has been often told. Two or three leading dates and incidents will serve as stepping-stones across the stream. The Bill which Lord John Russell brought in on March 1 was read a second time by a majority of one, and a defeat in committee decided ministers to advise a dissolution. The interview at which Earl Grey and Lord Brougham tendered this advice to the King would suggest a scene for the stage. The King fumed and his eye flashed with anger as he learned the preparations which had been made for his going down to the House, including even the ordering out of the Life Guards. His prerogative was doubly assailed. Ministers had dared to assume that he would do as they advised him, and they had even presumed to give orders to the army without his authority. But he went all the same. The House of Lords was in a state of tumult as the Tower guns announced the King's approach. The Ministerial decision had taken the peers by surprise. They dreaded an appeal to the country, and sincerely believed that they were

standing on the brink of a revolution. The King insisted upon wearing his crown, though the coronation had not yet taken place. He also insisted upon putting it on himself, and he put it on awry. Greville enters in his diary, 'George Villiers said that in his life he never saw such a scene, and as he looked at the King upon the throne, with the crown loose upon his head and the tall grim figure of Lord Grey close beside him with the sword of state in his hand, it was as if the King had got his executioner by his side, and the whole picture looked strikingly typical of his and our future destinies.'

The new Parliament met after a short interval and a second Reform Bill was introduced. Ministers were now all-powerful in the House of Commons. The Bill was read a third time by a majority of 106, and on October 3 the debate on the second reading began in the Lords. The only speech with which we are here concerned is Lord Melbourne's, not perhaps the weightiest that was delivered on that great occasion, but nevertheless interesting, since he spoke the experience of many besides himself. He had to acknowledge and justify his recantation. He had to confess that hitherto he had resisted every movement towards reform. He had even opposed the transfer of the East Retford seats to Birmingham. He did so from a persuasion that if you once began there could be no stopping. Manchester had as good a claim to representation as Birmingham, and a dozen other towns as good a claim as either. Much the same might be said of the whole country, which had grown immensely in wealth and population. Of one thing Melbourne declared himself convinced. There could be no half measures, and as it was settled by the irrevocable voice of the nation that the old system must go, the largest con-

cessions would be the wisest. The speech is delightful reading, solemn, sententious, and rich with constitutional lore. It goes in a ruminating way to the bottom of things. Is it not sometimes the duty of the Legislature to resist the will of the people? asked the opponents of the Bill. Certainly, is the admission in reply. 'But, my lords, although it may be our duty to resist the will of the people for a time, is it possible to resist it for ever, and have we not in this case resisted it long enough?' He quotes 'that great philosopher and statesman Lord Bacon' to show that though change is undesirable in civil affairs, it is inevitable when that which it is proposed to change is no longer supported by authority and consent. He draws upon his experience at the Home Office to warn their lordships that popular feeling may break out with irresistible violence if resistance is prolonged, and winds up by reminding them of the advice of the Roman Consul when preparing his decisive march against the Carthaginian general, 'a march which perhaps changed the destinies of the world—only do not procrastinate; do not make a measure which is safe if adopted immediately dangerous by delay.' The sentiment sounds more weighty and solemn in the words of the Roman historian, which are added as if to clinch the argument.

Lord Melbourne's speech, with all its persuasiveness, did not convert the peers. The Bill was thrown out on the second reading by a majority of 41. He had then the uneasy satisfaction of finding his forebodings too soon and too fully realised. The country was brought at once to the verge of civil war, and he had to sit from morning till night at the Home Office to take measures for the preservation of order. The restless spirits who hang on to the skirts of every

popular movement were eager for mischief. Nottingham Castle was set on fire. Bristol was for three days in the hands of the mob. These and similar outbreaks were speedily suppressed. There was much greater difficulty in dealing with the Birmingham Political Union and the mighty force of opinion which it embodied. A meeting of 150,000 men assembled in October soon after the fate of the Bill was known. They were advised to come armed, but this advice was countermanded. They voted an address to the King, praying his Majesty to create as many peers as might be necessary to pass the Bill, and they pledged themselves to pay no taxes in the event of its being rejected. They also passed a vote of thanks to Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell, who had borne the brunt of the battle in the House of Commons, and upon whose constancy the issue of the struggle depended. Lord John wrote at once in reply: 'Our prospects are obscured for a moment, but I trust only for a moment. It is impossible that the whisper of a faction should prevail against the voice of a nation.'

Melbourne had to keep a watchful eye on all these movements. He was no red-tapist. There was in him, when fully roused, a practical sagacity corresponding to mother-wit, and he was deterred by no false pride from adapting means to ends. When he wanted information he turned to his friend Mr. Francis Place, the philosophical tailor of Charing Cross. Place was a friend of Bentham, a contributor to the 'Westminster Review,' and the author of a work on the 'Principle of Population.' Melbourne had long known him in connection with the Westminster elections, in which his influence always went a long way. He was acquainted with most of the leading politicians of the Radical party in London, with Burdett, Hobhouse, de

Lacy Evans, Hume, and Roebuck, and he was in touch with the ruling spirits at Birmingham and elsewhere. His shop was almost as good as a club. Politicians would lounge in there and learn the latest news, while humbler members of the party, struck perhaps with some bright idea which might help on the cause, would go to him for advice. If anything was in the wind Place was sure to know of it. If any excessively prudent person, fearing lest some popular ebullition might do harm, wished to whisper a hint in the right quarter, Place was the best medium through which the whisper might be sent. Notable men from the country, like Thomas Attwood or Joseph Parkes, never failed to compare notes with him when they went to London to watch the progress of the Reform Bill at close quarters. In Maclise's 'Portrait Gallery' we see him sitting in his shop, with a row of ledgers behind him, bolt upright, stiff and angular, the hair brushed back from a brow rather high than spacious, with a face slightly puzzled and introspective in expression, and probably pale. Melbourne had, as we have seen, at one time occupied a considerable space in those ledgers from year to year; but he was better off now, and writs were unnecessary even as reminders. It would hardly have done to go straight from the Home Office to the oracle at Charing Cross; but Melbourne had his brother George to serve as a go-between, and a yet more trusty agent, his private secretary, Mr. Thomas Young. This person was a remarkable character. He had been recommended to Melbourne by the Duke of Devonshire, who had employed him on board his yacht when he went to St. Petersburg to attend the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas, and found him useful. He was rough-hewn, vulgar, presuming, but also shrewd and capable, and devoted to

those whose pay he took. It would perhaps be doing him no injustice to say that he had the manners and the fidelity of a bull-dog. He had his master's freedom of speech, but the bluffness which was acquired and half-affected in the one was probably innate with the other. Melbourne made him his private secretary. The appointment was a freak of humour, almost a stroke of genius. Through him, Melbourne was in close contact with the nether world. He could learn at any time what was going on there. Place was rather proud of being on confidential terms with the occupant of the ante-room at the Home Office, and between them they wielded a good deal of influence over the obscurer movements of the party.

Earl Grey, a sincere reformer, but an aristocrat to the core, looked with disdain and suspicion upon the agitation which, much against his will, he had been the means of exciting. He could hardly brook his own handiwork, and was especially exercised over the proceedings of the Birmingham Political Union. The members were giving themselves a military organisation. They professed to be peaceful in their aims, but they were already pledging themselves in a certain contingency not to pay taxes, and they might any day turn out into the streets an army ready for action. The movement, moreover, was extending. Unions were being formed in London. Sir Francis Burdett was the president of one of them. They were advised to carry arms, and were beginning to call themselves the National Guard. Earl Grey was nervous, and urged Melbourne to take action of some sort. Melbourne was not nervous. His maxim was that if it was not clear what ought to be done it was best to do nothing. It is perhaps a good thing that we had a man of his easy temperament, but at the

same time a thoughtful, brooding, ingenious man, capable on an emergency of great decision and energy, at the head of home affairs. He consented to issue a proclamation, warning the Unions against the military organisation they seemed disposed to assume; he made a private appeal to Sir Francis Burdett; he put himself in communication with Attwood and Parkes at Birmingham; and managed, by mingled expostulation, forbearance, and good temper, to control the storm. Danger was kept at bay till the success of Lord Lyndhurst's motion in committee on the third Reform Bill led to the resignation of ministers, and brought the Duke of Wellington into power for three days. When the Duke seemed to be preparing to take the revolution in hand, and the soldiers in the barracks at Birmingham were sharpening their swords for what might happen, the danger was extreme; but it disappeared when the ministry were reinstated in office, and the passing of the Bill was rendered certain by the consent of the King to create peers should it be found necessary.

Throughout the final crisis in the Lords, Melbourne's conduct was in harmony with his speech. Practically he was a convinced reformer. He had no sympathy with the waverers. He could not understand their scruples and hesitations. He said to Greville that after having swallowed the disfranchisement of the pocket boroughs, a really useful part, as he deemed it, of the old system, he did not see why they should strain at the rest. Palmerston was one of those who were willing to cut the Bill down to suit the waverers and make sure of a majority in the Lords. He wrote to Melbourne in rather caustic terms, half upbraiding him for not being in favour of the scheme, and for having talked of something even more democratic. Melbourne's self-posses-

sion and quiet balance of mind gave him some advantage over those who took sides more passionately. He talked lightly, after his wont, on all the aspects of the question, much to the bewilderment of Greville, who was playing rather fussily the part of negotiator between the factions; but one thing he saw clearly. It was of no use passing a measure which would not satisfy the popular demands. That would be labour in vain and would make them all fools. He was opposed to the creating of peers till the necessity for it was proved. But he stood by the Bill as it was, 'The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill,' and felt an immense relief when it received the royal assent, though doubtless, like another statesman, when another Reform Bill was on its way to the statute-book, he felt, in common with many of his colleagues, that it was 'a leap in the dark.' The wisest men on the eve of a great change can hardly be expected to forestall the more cheaply purchased wisdom of the next generation.

CHAPTER IX

PREMIER

Further work at the Home Office—State of the country—Earl Grey's apprehensions—Melbourne will have no repressive measures—The Dorchester labourers—Robert Owen—Irish policy of the Government—Growing dissensions in the Cabinet—The passing of the Reform Bill has severed the bond of union—O'Connell and the 'Rupert of debate'—Proposed secularisation of Church property in Ireland—'Johnny upsets the coach'—Earl Grey resigns—Melbourne accepts the premiership.

WHEN the first Reform Parliament met in January 1833 the ship of the State may be said to have entered upon a voyage in latitudes hitherto untravelled, where coast-lines, rocks, shoals, and even the prevailing winds were all unknown. The voyage was begun, moreover, amid the ground-swell of a storm which had hardly subsided, and the vessel lurched heavily at setting out. The agitation which led to the passing of the Reform Bill was social in its motives and in its objects, it was political only in its means. It was not from any mere love of symmetery, nor yet as an assertion of right, that the people had demanded and obtained a new House of Commons. They were bent upon the redress of evils which were sorely felt. The country seemed to be going to ruin. The towns swarmed with unemployed workmen. The rural districts were swamped with pauperism. Every man of note had his patent remedy. Attwood believed

that the one thing wanted was a paper currency. The Birmingham Political Union originated in a crusade against the despotism of bullion. Other specifics had their abettors. The number of notices of new Bills at the beginning of the session gave some amusement, and more alarm, to the older members. It was at any rate clear that there would be much disappointment, and what would happen when certain fond illusions were dispelled could hardly be conjectured.

The disturbed state of the country kept Melbourne fully employed. The Home Office was the chief centre of interest so far as administration went. It was one of the peculiar features of the situation that the upper classes were in a state of panic. They saw a ghost in every shadow, and scented the evidence of far-reaching combinations in every petty beerhouse club. Melbourne was not in advance of his age, especially on the labour question, in which so much progress has been made within the last quarter of a century, but his influence was on the whole soothing and restraining. It is also important to remember that labour, poor-law relief in aid of wages, and magisterial jurisdiction were so much mixed up together, that much which would seem strange now was then quite natural. We find him writing in explanation of the law to a Dorsetshire magistrate: 'The farmers,' he says, 'stand to the labourers in the same relation as the master manufacturers stand to their workmen. The law with respect to both is substantially the same. By that law, whether wise or unwise, unions and combinations for the purpose of raising or of lowering wages, provided they do not resort to violence, fraud, intimidation, illegal oaths, or acts in themselves illegal, are legal.' He had apparently been asked whether the magistrates should not advise the farmers to dismiss from their employment

labourers who had joined the union, and having stated the law he bases on it a conclusive appeal. 'How then is it possible for the Government to advise the magistrates, or for the magistrates to advise the farmers, to discharge their men for doing that which may not only be legal, but just and reasonable?' At the same time he regards these combinations as pernicious, and we learn from another letter that he would have been glad to hear that the farmers had refused to employ labourers belonging to the union, if they did so of their own accord. He also thinks that the farmers should receive every encouragement and support in such proceedings, 'always taking it for granted that they have themselves acted justly, and have not generally attempted to reduce the wages of the labourers below their fair and natural level.'

There was no lack of incentives to vigorous action on the part of Melbourne's colleagues. We have already seen Earl Grey taking alarm at the military organisation affected by the people at Birmingham. His apprehensions are again excited by a meeting which Mr. Attwood summoned for May, to discuss the policy of the Government. The object, he admits, is not unlawful, but he regards the means employed, the calling upon the people to come together 'once more' in their countless masses as at least dangerous to the public peace, and he thus winds up: 'That it is necessary, however, to take measures for checking proceedings, the avowed aim of which is to overawe the King and the Parliament by a display of physical force, appears to me incontestable.' Lord Lansdowne is also impressed with the need of vigour. He has heard of one instance of successful resistance to the payment of the new house tax, and he writes at once to express his strong conviction of the mis-

chievous effect it may produce. He 'sees every appearance, not only in London but in almost every town, of the formation of a Radical party, not yet strong in numbers, and much less in influence, but which any semblance of triumph would call into activity.' He therefore trusts that 'the means may be found for preventing any further effectual resistance to the law, for which no effort should be spared.' The Duke of Wellington calls Melbourne's attention to the large number of unions or societies that exist in Hampshire, and holds himself ready to execute any instructions he may receive. The proceedings of the Trades Unions had caused some anxiety at Windsor Castle. The King writes to Melbourne through his private secretary, pointing out that the unions avow their intention of appealing to brute force, and that though the varying interests of the different trades may prevent any general combination, they may nevertheless do much harm to the 'commerce and prosperity' of the country. 'Upon the whole,' so runs the closing passage, with its characteristic italics, 'the King cannot lose sight of the importance of endeavouring to impose some check to the *progress* of this evil, and to adopt some *preventive* measures, instead of trusting to its *decay* after the edifice shall have been injured, and he is anxious that the question should be brought under the consideration of his Government at the approaching meeting of the Cabinet.' Melbourne's reply is equally grave and amusing. He 'partakes of the opinion' expressed by his Majesty, 'that the prevalence of these combinations affords reason to apprehend that there must be something in the law of the country on the subject inadequate and defective, and which requires to be amended.' But 'the difficulty is to discover where the inadequacy and defect lies, and how it is to be supplied or

corrected.' He gives the King a summary of the laws that have been passed on the subject from the time of Edward I. This early date shows, he says, 'the antiquity of the mischief.' That all these laws, thirty-six in number, were failures, is proved by the fact that they were all repealed in the reign of his Majesty's predecessor, when the law then in force was passed, and it is probable that this new law will prove a failure like the rest. The letter concludes in the same style of solemn rigmarole, which was nevertheless suited to the occasion and adapted to the royal capacities. 'Upon the whole, Viscount Melbourne humbly trusts that your Majesty will rest assured that the subject will be considered by his Majesty's servants with that circumspection which is suggested by its evident difficulty, and at the same time with the firmness and determination which are required by its dangerous and formidable character.'

Melbourne resisted all these incentives to strain or to change the law. He kept on the even tenor of his way. He had a supreme faculty for seeing where nothing could be done, and he had a contempt for fuss. Some ministers would have been tempted to make a reputation out of the disorder which prevailed. They would have brought in Bills of a hundred clauses. They would have made moving statements in Parliament, and glorified their own sagacity in the discovery of remedies. They would probably have acquired much immediate fame by so doing. The 'friends of order' would have rallied to them, and the country would have been called upon to be grateful that the interests of society were in safe hands. This is what Sidmouth would have done, and it is perhaps what one or two of his colleagues would have done if they had been in his place. Melbourne had a keen scepticism, and at the same time a

large faith which is sometimes its mute companion. He placed little trust in Government interference where ordinary passions and interests are concerned, and he had a strong confidence in the self-adjusting and self-rectifying tendencies of society. 'Better do nothing,' 'better leave things alone,' were with him no maxims of indolence, but the dictates of solid sense and natural insight. Probably the world would have got on much better than it has done if the same maxims had been more generally observed.

On due occasion Melbourne could take any amount of trouble, and show that he was not lacking in firmness. This was seen in the case of the Dorchester labourers and of the efforts made on their behalf. They had been found guilty of belonging to a secret society whose members were bound together by illegal oaths. They were sentenced to transportation, and, to make the sentence more impressive, they were conducted straight from the court of justice to the ship which was to convey them to Sydney. The National Trades Unions took up their cause, and a great agitation was set on foot for their recall. But sympathy for them was a mere incident in a general movement in advocacy of the claims of labour as opposed to capital, and of the poor as the victims of the rich. Robert Owen, who cared nothing for politics, was one of its leaders. He was an unselfish but dreamy philanthropist, who had his own views of the way in which the world was to be regenerated, and in default of better methods fell in with the idea that working men should work for each other. Hitherto they had toiled for the wealthy; henceforth let them toil for themselves. All that they wanted was the machinery of exchange, and this could be easily contrived. The Dorsetshire labourers were the victims of an accursed system,

which it was high time to get rid of, and the first step towards the freedom of industry could not be taken in a more signal way than by compelling the Government to restore those unhappy men to their native land. Accordingly a grand demonstration of the trades of London was organised for April 21, to be held in White Conduit Fields, from which place the many thousands that might be expected to assemble were to march in procession to Whitehall. Owen, who was most anxious that everything should go on peacefully, sent Melbourne a few days beforehand a copy of the petition which he was to be asked to present to the King, wishing to know whether he would be willing to receive it. Willing, certainly, was Melbourne's reply, if it were brought to him without any show of force or menace, but not otherwise. Owen understood what was meant, and would have persuaded his friends to entrust the presentation of the petition to a few safe hands, but this was deemed far below the importance of the occasion. The procession was the great thing, greater even than the petition, and to Whitehall they would go. Melbourne made all the preparations which prudence could suggest. Special constables were sworn in, and the military held in readiness, but kept carefully out of sight. When the eventful day arrived, some twenty-five or thirty thousand men, with flags and bands, streamed through the streets of London on their way to the Home Office. We have seen many such sights since, but they were not so familiar then, and Melbourne is entitled to all the honour which attends a novel experiment. The business of the procession was to escort the deputies, and having left them at the Home Office, it moved on to Kennington Common to await the result. Owen was one of the deputies, and the Rev. Arthur Wade, vicar of St.

Nicholas, Warwick, who had bestowed his benediction on many a meeting of the Birmingham Political Union, attired in 'cassock, gown, and bands,' attended in the capacity of chaplain. Melbourne, who had watched the procession from the windows, refused to see them. He informed them, by the Under-Secretary, that he could not receive a petition presented with such a display of physical force, but that he would be ready to receive it any other day if brought to him in a proper manner, and lay it before the King. The result was duly reported at Kennington, with the addition of this official mandate: 'And now, brothers, it is the order of the council that you all return promptly and in good order to your several lodges, there to discuss our future proceedings.'

Melbourne's administration of the Home Office at a highly critical period must be regarded as a success. He showed adequate energy where energy was required. His slowness to act, resulting from excessive reflectiveness rather than from indolence, was an advantage. The characteristic qualities of his intellect suited the circumstances with which he had to deal. The Government, as a whole, were not equally fortunate. They passed two great measures; they abolished negro slavery in the Colonies, and they amended the Poor Laws. These measures in all probability could not have been carried if it had not been for the authority and force imparted to the Legislature by the Reform Act, but they nevertheless represented the conclusions at which thoughtful men of all parties had arrived, and can hardly be regarded as the exclusive triumph of the Whig administration. Melbourne had not much to do with either. His experience at the Home Office threw much light upon the question of the Poor Laws, and must have convinced him

that some change was absolutely necessary; but he had not that large acquaintance with social and economic principles which would have enabled him to take an active part in the framing of a new system, and he had hardly steel enough in his composition to be in hearty sympathy with the harsher features of the measure which was introduced and carried. He had not much to do in the House of Lords outside of his own department. The Poor Law Amendment Bill naturally belonged to it, but its successful advocacy demanded powers which he did not possess, and it fell as of right into the hands of Lord Brougham, whose encyclopædic knowledge and versatile talents were equal to any task. But these two great measures, though they have conferred a lasting splendour upon the first Reform Parliament, had little to do with its distinctive and determining policy, or with its premature fate. The destiny that awaited it is still a wonder, though it cannot be regarded as a mystery.

The administration of Earl Grey was the first attempt of the Liberals to govern the country after an exile from office of half a century. It was composed of men who had not been accustomed to work together, and between whom the ties of principle were frail. Some of them had been associated with previous Tory Governments, and only professed a slow and modified conversion. The more liberal element was not of the same fibre throughout. Earl Grey and Lord Althorp were the two members of the Cabinet who stood in the closest confidence with each other, but even they were extremely divergent in their sympathies. Aristocratic and democratic—these were the opposite poles to which they tended. Taking the Cabinet as a whole, they were surprised and forced into concert on the question

of Parliamentary Reform. The events of the hour, the attitude of public opinion, and the declared views of two or three who were marked out as leaders, drove them to a swift decision, and when once the contest was entered upon they were compelled to keep together. When the Bill was passed, the bond, which rather held than united them, was severed. Other questions then came to the front, and the process of disintegration set in rapidly.

It seems like anticipating history by sixty years to say that Ireland was the rock on which the Government foundered. This is not the place to enter at any length into the discussion of Irish politics, but we are dealing with Lord Melbourne's career, and we have to show how it came to pass that he suddenly rose to the highest office in the State. In showing this it will also be shown how, though certainly not endowed with supreme qualifications for that exalted position, he succeeded in retaining it so long. It will be found that while the way in which Irish questions were treated was the great defect of Earl Grey's administration, it was the redeeming feature of Lord Melbourne's. The difference is one that does him honour, and all the more so since it was largely due to the influence of his personal character, which, whatever its deficiencies, was full of sympathy and swayed by a love of justice.

There was a sanguine hope that when the Catholic Emancipation Act became law Ireland would enter upon a period of repose. There must have been disappointment in any case unless other remedial measures had quickly followed, since religious intolerance, avowed and practised by the State, was only one of the evils from which Ireland suffered. But it was the most irritating and exacerbating grievance, and if due effect had been given to the eman-

cipating statute, a pacific influence would have been diffused through all classes, and the accomplishment of other reforms would have been rendered easier. But the law was allowed to remain a dead letter. For all practical purposes, so far as local administration was concerned, it might as well not have been passed at all. It threw open official appointments to Catholics; their religion was no longer a legal barrier to employment in the service of the State. But of what avail was this if the Government steadfastly refused to employ them? Their case was made worse rather than better. To be disabled by law was bad enough, but to be disabled by the arbitrary will of those with whom the power of appointment rested was far more mortifying. If the Tories had been in office this practical exclusion from the benefits of the Emancipation Act might have been understood. However inexcusable, it would at least have been intelligible. But the Whigs were in office, the very people who had been preaching Liberalism for half a century. What could be said of them except that they were as intolerant as their predecessors, and differed from them only in being hypocrites as well as bigots.

If the spirit of the Emancipation Act had been allowed to control the Irish policy of the Government, all posts of honour, emolument, or trust throughout Ireland would have been thrown open to Catholics as freely as to Protestants; and as the Catholics were a long way in arrear, the preference should have been given to them till the balance was fairly even. It would have been especially expedient, to say nothing of justice, to recognise the claims of O'Connell. He was the most representative man in Ireland. All eyes were turned to him, and any honour done to him would have been accepted by six millions of Catholics as done

to themselves. There was no reason why a place should not have been found for him in the Government. He had not then committed himself to the agitation for repeal. The changes he desired as regards tithe and the Irish Church were such as men like Althorp and Russell were eager to accomplish. No man was more amenable to good treatment than O'Connell. It was relentless and irrational hostility that made him impracticable. Yet he was held at arm's length, refused the position at the Bar which belonged to him by customary right, and treated as a political pariah. It was an act of transcendent folly, and both countries have suffered for it ever since. The person chiefly to blame is Earl Grey himself, who, with all his excellences, was cold, reserved, and proud, full of starched traditions, with no feeling for what was generous, urbane, or even politic. The mischief was completed when he sent to Ireland as Chief Secretary Mr. Stanley, the late Lord Derby, a man of infinite ability, splendid in his very defects, but by no means fitted to be the bearer of an olive branch to an impoverished and distracted people who were willing to forget their old resentments, but for that reason only the more sensitive to new affronts. Melbourne saw and deplored the mischief which was certain to ensue. As Home Secretary, it was within his province to exercise some control over Irish policy. But he could hardly venture to overrule the Premier, and he probably felt how hopeless it was to expect from the fiery Chief Secretary the deference which he, when holding the same position, had shown to Lord Lansdowne. He might have resigned, but he perhaps reflected that this would do no good, and that it would be wiser to reserve himself for better opportunities. His own sense of the failure of the Emancipation Act was expressed

in a pithy sentence, the freedom of which may be excused for the sake of its truth : 'What all the wise men promised has not happened, and what all the d——d fools said would happen has come to pass.'

Mr. Stanley had no sooner set foot in Dublin Castle than the duel between him and O'Connell began. The question first fought out was the right of holding public meetings. The Chief Secretary had the law on his side, and the meetings were proclaimed. O'Connell persisted and was prosecuted. A true bill was found against him ; he argued the case on technical grounds with the ingenuity of a lawyer, but at last submitted to a hostile verdict, no doubt in the full persuasion that it would lead to nothing, as the result proved. He was never called up for judgment, and he went on holding his meetings. The Chief Secretary had far greater difficulties on his hands. A tithe war was raging over the greater part of Ireland. The peasantry refused to pay, the clergy were unable to enforce payment, and were in great distress. A notable expedient was then adopted. The Government advanced to the clergy some portion of the tithe by way of relief, and undertook to collect the tithes themselves, the Lord-Lieutenant becoming, as O'Connell said, the tithe proctor for all Ireland. But the Government met with no better success than the clergy, and the collection of the impost was virtually abandoned. Evictions were at the same time being carried out on a large scale. The abolition of the forty-shilling freeholders had deprived the small holdings of their political value, and landlords were throwing them together into larger farms. The evicted tenants had no alternative but to bid against each other, and rack-rents were racked still higher. There were distress and confusion everywhere, but a reformed

Parliament was about to assemble, and all eyes turned to it wistfully for relief.

Such was the situation of affairs at the beginning of 1833, and events soon moved rapidly. The Speech from the Throne foreshadowed a Coercion Bill, and certain measures for the reform of the Irish Church. The Coercion Bill was brought into the House of Lords by Earl Grey. We have only to draw upon our recollections of ten years ago to learn the case he made out and the remedies he proposed. Only in one respect did the measure go further than others of more recent times. It provided that martial law should be set up in such districts as the Lord-Lieutenant thought fit to proclaim. The Bill passed rapidly through the House of Lords, and was sent down to the Commons, where it was introduced by Lord Althorp. He went through his task perfunctorily. It was obviously one from which he recoiled. Lord John Russell, in his 'Recollections,' thus describes the scene: 'The Liberal majority were disappointed, sullen, and ready to break out into mutiny against their chief. Mr. Stanley, who was sitting next to me, greatly annoyed at the aspect of the House, said to me, 'I meant not to have spoken till to-morrow night, but I find I must speak to-night.' He took Lord Althorp's box of official papers, and went up to a room where he could look over them quietly. After the debate had proceeded two or three hours longer, with no change of temper in the House, Stanley rose.' Then follows such a recital of thrilling incidents as we in later times have been too familiar with. He recalled to the recollection of the House that O'Connell had spoken of them as '658 scoundrels.' 'In a tempest of scorn and indignation he excited the anger of the men so designated against the author of the calumny. The House which two hours before

seemed about to yield to the great agitator was now almost ready to tear him to pieces. In the midst of the storm which his eloquence had raised, Stanley sat down, having achieved one of the greatest triumphs ever won by the powers of oratory.'

The 'Rupert of Debate' had won the victory. The Coercion Bill passed as a matter of course, and we shall presently hear of it again linked with remarkable consequences. The Bill for the reform of the Irish Church, brought in by Lord Althorp, on that principle of equipoise between coercion and concession which has marked most of our Irish legislation, raised a question which was destined to remain unsettled for years to come, and to produce a ministerial catastrophe almost at the outset. It provided for the abolition of ten out of the twenty-two Irish bishoprics, for the extinction of Church cess, and for a general revision of the revenues of the Church. It was anticipated that a surplus of 3,000,000*l.* would be shown over and above the Church's needs, and the Bill proposed to place it at the disposal of Parliament for public purposes. This is the famous Appropriation clause which wrought so much political havoc—then and afterwards. It was in the Bill as originally introduced, but was dropped on the motion of Mr. Stanley, and ultimately a Commission of Inquiry was appointed. The correspondence published in Lord John Russell's 'Life' shows that there had been serious dissensions in the Cabinet the previous autumn while the Bill was in preparation. Althorp, Lord John, and Lord Durham were for appropriating a large portion of the revenues of the Irish Church to education. Lord John even went so far as to tender his resignation; but Earl Grey stoutly resisted the principle of secularising Church property, and he gave in,

swayed partly by Lord Althorp's example, and partly by the advice of Lord Holland, whom Earl Grey begged him to consult before coming to any decision. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to understand how the clause got into the Bill. At any rate it was soon expunged, and the question seemed to be amicably settled on the basis of a working compromise. The following year, 1834, a Bill was introduced for a final adjustment of the tithes in Ireland, with a view to relieve the occupier while respecting the interests of the Church. The principle of secular appropriation was not directly raised by the Bill, but it was alive in the Cabinet, where opinions were found to be irreconcilably opposed. Still, there seemed to be no prospect of an immediate outbreak. Both parties were anxious to work together as far as they could, and it was understood that they could all give an honest support to the Bill. But Lord John was always troubled with a belligerent sense of consistency, and it precipitated an explosion. He imagined that Mr. Stanley, in speaking for the Bill, had let fall some expressions signifying his determination to maintain the Irish Church as it was, and he felt that honesty required him to give similar publicity to his own views. He did so. He said, in effect, that in his opinion the revenues of the Irish Church were larger than necessary for the religious and moral instruction of the persons belonging to that Church, and that if the question arose in a practical shape, he should be prepared to act upon that opinion, even though it should exact from him the sacrifice of parting with his friends. The declaration was received with immense cheering. Stanley pencilled a few words to Sir James Graham, 'Johnny has upset the coach.' There was some trouble at the next Cabinet meeting. The final push which

sent the vehicle clean over was given by Mr. Ward, the member for St. Alban's, who embodied in a motion sharp and precise the principle which Lord John had dealt with in general terms. The debate on this motion had not proceeded far when Lord Althorp stated that he had just received information which induced him to beg that it might be adjourned till the following Monday. When Monday came it was announced that Earl Ripon, Mr. Stanley, Sir James Graham, and the Duke of Richmond had left the Government.

This was the first rent in the Whig administration; it was soon followed by a more serious one. The Coercion Act of the year before would soon lapse, and its renewal was thought necessary. It has already been said that the most offensive feature in the restrictive policy of the Government was the power given to the Lord-Lieutenant to forbid by proclamation the holding of public meetings. It was this that led to the prosecution of O'Connell. He had persisted, and for some time there was no further interference. The Coercion Act of the previous year had given the Lord-Lieutenant power to proclaim meetings, and the question had arisen in some quarters whether it was necessary to renew this power in the new Act. It is a tangled misunderstanding, but it can easily be made clear if one or two points are kept in view, and it is surely worth even now as much attention as is given to an ordinary police case. Lord Wellesley was now Lord-Lieutenant, and his son-in-law, Mr. Littleton, Chief Secretary. In his official correspondence with Earl Grey, Lord Wellesley had expressed his conviction that it would be necessary to renew the Coercion Act as it stood, with the exception of the court-martial clauses. He had done so as lately as June 11; but on the 21st he wrote

to say that he thought the clauses relating to public meetings might be dispensed with. The sudden change awoke suspicions in Earl Grey's mind. This last letter seemed to betoken some private correspondence of which he was unaware, as indeed it did. The confusion began with Lord Brougham, who wrote to Littleton suggesting that he should use his influence with Lord Wellesley to induce him to drop his demand for a renewal of the public meeting clauses. He did so ; Lord Wellesley yielded, and the letter of the 21st to Earl Grey was the result.

Littleton told Althorp of this letter, and Althorp agreed with him that in the face of such a declaration from the Lord-Lieutenant it would be unconstitutional to ask Parliament to renew the clauses. Anxious to propitiate O'Connell, Littleton asked Althorp whether he might not tell him privately, and as in confidence, that the precise form and extent of the new Coercion Bill were not decided upon, and Althorp said that he saw no harm in his doing this, if he went no further. But Littleton went further. He gave O'Connell to understand that neither Althorp nor himself approved of the clauses in question, and that they would find no place in the Bill. So far no harm was done. But harm was done in the Cabinet. Earl Grey was affronted at the discovery of what had been going on without his knowledge. He insisted upon holding Lord Wellesley to his first view. He obtained from him another letter virtually recalling that of the 21st. He had even talked over Lord Brougham, the author of the whole proceeding. Lord Althorp was naturally indignant. He divided the Cabinet upon the clauses, but failed. On going home he wrote to Earl Grey declaring that he would be unable to move those clauses in the House of Commons, and

tendering his resignation, in the hope apparently that this might have more weight than his arguments. But it had no such effect. Earl Grey refused to budge an inch, and on being assured that his resignation would upset the Government, Althorp reluctantly yielded. Accordingly the Bill was introduced by Earl Grey in its original form, and the next day O'Connell exploded. He told the House of Commons all that Littleton had told him, and taxed Lord Althorp with insincerity. Lord Althorp could hesitate no longer. 'The pig's killed,' he whispered to Lord John Russell, who sat beside him, and forthwith resigned. Earl Grey sent Lord Althorp's letter of resignation to the King, and sent his own along with it.

Such was the premature and ignominious collapse of the administration which carried the Reform Bill. It was an act of suicide. The really irreconcilable elements had been purged away a few months before. The administration was now fairly homogeneous, and might well have gone on, but for personal susceptibilities which were out of place in a great statesman. If Earl Grey had but accepted the assurance of the Lord-Lieutenant that the public-meeting clauses of the Coercion Act were no longer necessary, careless as to the way in which this conclusion had been reached, and too careful of the public service to be childishly jealous of his authority, the harmony of the Cabinet need never have been for a moment disturbed. The Bill would have been improved, O'Connell would have been conciliated by a proof of confidence and a sign of leniency, due deference would have been shown to the more liberal section of the Cabinet, and the next ten years might have had a nobler history. It was a great default of public duty, but the deed was done. A Cabinet,' says Lord John Russell, 'was summoned for the

following evening. Meeting Lord Melbourne in the Park he said, "I believe we are summoned to-night to consider a decision already made." At the meeting of the Cabinet in the evening, Lord Grey placed before us the letters containing his own resignation and that of Lord Althorp, which he had sent early in the morning to the King. He likewise laid before us the King's gracious acceptance of his resignation, and he gave to Lord Melbourne a sealed letter from his Majesty. Lord Melbourne, upon opening the letter, found in it an invitation to him to undertake the formation of a Government. Seeing that nothing was to be done that night, I left the Cabinet and went to the opera.'

The King's selection of Melbourne was a surprise to most people, and probably to none more so than to Melbourne himself. He may well have been dazed for a moment by surveying the giddy height which he was invited to ascend. He knew that the task involved infinite trouble, and he did not like trouble, but neither did he shrink from it. There is nothing like the energy of which a strong but inert nature is capable when roused to exertion, as Melbourne himself had shown more than once, and was to show again. What is certain is that he at once developed some of the qualities required by his position. More dignified or more constitutional action was never exhibited by any minister than Melbourne displayed in his negotiations with the King. After assuring himself that none of his colleagues who might seem to have a prior claim would take the post, he accepted the King's invitation, but in doing so he imposed conditions. The King wished him to consult with Wellington, Peel, and Stanley, and endeavour to bring about a coalition. This was the King's favourite idea. Melbourne told his Majesty it was impossible. But he acted with

perfect openness. He sent to the persons named copies of the King's communication and of his own reply, and they agreed with him that the thing was a dream. The King put to him a series of questions as to the persons he would think of introducing into the Government, and as to the policy he would pursue. Melbourne assured the King that he had no intention of making a sudden change in the character of the administration, but he declined to adopt 'a principle of exclusion' as impolitic and dangerous, and reserved to himself 'the power of recommending to your Majesty at any future time any one of your Majesty's subjects who is qualified by law to fully serve your Majesty.' The King had set forth in writing his full assurance that he could rely upon any administration presided over by Lord Melbourne 'to resist further encroachment upon the prerogative of the Crown, the Church Establishments in England and Ireland, and upon the character, the responsibility, and the constitutional share in the Legislature of the aristocracy of the country.' To some of the points raised by the King's fussy susceptibility it was not worth while to take exception, but on practical questions Melbourne left no room for misapprehension. 'Your Majesty will not,' he said, 'be surprised that Viscount Melbourne should be anxious to state that neither he nor his colleagues can, by acquiescing in the above-mentioned sentiments and expressions, be considered to preclude themselves from offering to your Majesty such measures for the reformation of the hierarchy in England and Ireland as may appear to be advisable.' He also told the King that the public meeting clauses in the Coercion Bill could not possibly be renewed. The reservations here made are in harmony with the views expressed in Melbourne's speech in the House of Commons,

on the dismissal of the ministry of All the Talents twenty-eight years before. He declined to bind himself by pledges. He held himself free to offer any advice which he might deem necessary. He entered upon the Premiership with unshackled hands. The King assented, but reluctantly, and soon began to turn his thoughts elsewhere.

CHAPTER X

EGO ET REX MEUS

Difficulties of office—The pranks of Lord Brougham—Lord Althorp goes to the House of Lords—Melbourne's letter to the King—His interview with the King at Brighton—Summarily dismissed and Sir Robert Peel sent for—Failure of an unconstitutional experiment—Melbourne avenged—Premier again—How he manages the King—Lord Brougham disposed of—Mrs. Norton; a second social misadventure—Hostility of the Lords—Lord John's 'Finality'—Radical discontent—Death of the King.

LORD MELBOURNE entered upon his new duties with the hearty assent of his friends, and with as much goodwill as could be expected on the part of his opponents. He was not credited with ambition. He had never been involved in eager rivalries. He had no great qualities to parade, and he knew it. He gave himself no airs and excited no envy. He had not sought the honours of the Premiership. He had simply picked up the prize which was thrown at his feet, as any other man would have done in the same position. Above all, he was known to be amiable and conciliatory, and there were some perhaps among his political associates who regarded these qualities as a special recommendation, since they might be made to throw some advantages in their way.

Among these associates was Lord Brougham, whom the present generation remembers as a wandering star of vast

magnitude but of dimmed lustre. For twenty years he had played a great part in the public life of England. His abilities were unquestionable, but his character was uncertain and eccentric. His egotism was unbounded, and it is doubtful by whom he was most dreaded, by his enemies or by his friends. We have seen that at one time he taunted Melbourne with being a Canningite, but that did not prevent him from offering his services to Canning when Canning became minister. He wrote Lord Althorp a letter of bitter reproach for resigning office, and thus breaking up the administration of Earl Grey, though it was he who set the secret machinery going which forced him to resign. As the keeper of the King's conscience, he naturally thought that his proper place was at the King's side, and he used the artifices of political terror as ecclesiastics in former days used those of religion. But the King had a ready means of relief. He had only to seek the company of the Queen and his children and the spell was gone. Improving upon the choice of Lord Bacon, the Chancellor took all politics for his province, and was as ready to intermeddle in the business of his colleagues as to exercise absolute authority in that which he deemed his own. He privately boasted that it was he who had made Melbourne Prime Minister, and he acted as if their respective parts were those of master and man. He laid important Bills on the table of the House, one of them involving a constitutional change in the functions of the House of Lords, without having so much as mentioned them in the Cabinet. Finally, as soon as Parliament was up, he went on an oratorical tour in Scotland, taking the Great Seal with him, and indulged in a series of extravagances which seemed to combine the parts of a mountebank and a cheap-jack.

The King was highly incensed when he learned that the symbol of royal authority was travelling post-chaise through the Highlands, and the reports which reached him increased his indignation. A tedious correspondence was thrust upon Melbourne, who had to soothe the royal irritation and make himself in some sense responsible for proceedings which filled him with disgust. To dismiss the offender was impossible, and equally so to attempt to put any restraint upon him. It would have been like trying to draw out leviathan with a hook. Happily he had more sensible colleagues, but they were not all considerate. Lord Lansdowne was the President of the Council, and a man whom one might suppose to be duly impressed with a sense of ministerial responsibility, yet we find him at this critical moment, when the new administration was hardly under way, taking offence because by some mischance the names of two persons in whom he was interested were left out of the Irish Poor Law Commission, and tendering his resignation. Lord Melbourne's fund of good nature, which supplied the place and answered some of the ends of statesmanship, was soon drawn upon. He wrote letters of explanation and apology to Lord Lansdowne's disappointed friends, consulted Lord Lansdowne himself over the next vacant Garter, and the offence was condoned.

A more serious embarrassment was the prospect of losing Lord Althorp's services in the House of Commons. Earl Spencer was in feeble health, and his death a contingency to be reckoned with before long. His son might remain a member of the Government when transferred to the House of Lords, but that would be no equivalent for his absence from the House of which he was the idolised leader. The attachment felt for him was extraordinary. This is the

common testimony of men of all parties, and nothing could be more creditable both to him and to the House. For he was not a man of shining parts, nor even of great ability. His manners were awkward, he was slow of utterance, and had no easy or rapid powers of apprehension. But he was transparently truthful, honest to the core, the very soul of integrity and honour. Character was his one sole equipment, and it was held to be sufficient. Melbourne would not have consented to undertake the Government if Althorp, much against his inclination, had not allowed himself to be prevailed upon to remain at his post. By tradition a Whig, all his instincts were liberal, and while never straying far from the orthodox centre of gravity, he commanded the confidence of the most advanced members of the party. At the same time it did not follow that his loss would be absolutely irreparable. There was Lord John Russell. He was as true a Whig as Althorp, and quite as advanced in his views, while in political knowledge and oratorical talent he was his superior. He had been the first to take in hand the disfranchisement of the rotten boroughs. He had carried the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. He had been entrusted by the Government with the management of the Reform Bill, and had acquitted himself brilliantly, while in the historical associations that are dear to Liberalism no name could be richer than his. There was but one thing against him in view of successorship to the post which might soon be vacant. The opinions he had expressed on the subject of the Irish Church were not to the taste of the King.

Earl Spencer died on November 10, and on the 12th Melbourne wrote to the King soliciting an audience. One or two passages of his letter and of the King's reply must

be quoted textually. 'Viscount Melbourne presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and is anxious in the present emergency to wait upon your Majesty and receive your Majesty's commands. Your Majesty will recollect that the Government in its present form was mainly founded upon the personal weight and influence possessed by Earl Spencer (Lord Althorp) in the House of Commons, and upon the arrangement which placed in his hands the conduct of the business of the Government in that assembly. That foundation is now withdrawn by the elevation of that nobleman to the House of Peers, and in the new and altered circumstances it is for your Majesty to consider whether it is your pleasure to authorise Viscount Melbourne to make such fresh arrangements as may enable your Majesty's present servants to continue to conduct the affairs of the country, or whether your Majesty deems it advisable to adopt any other course.' After protesting his readiness to place his services at the King's disposal 'so long as they can be given honourably and conscientiously, and are deemed worthy of acceptance,' he thus concludes: 'But Viscount Melbourne earnestly entreats that no personal consideration for him may prevent your Majesty from taking any measures or seeking any other advice which your Majesty may think more likely to conduce to your Majesty's service and the advantage of the country.' The messenger who took this letter to Brighton brought back the King's reply. After assuring Melbourne of his high esteem, and of the regret it would cause him to lose his valuable services, the King proceeds: 'His Majesty, however, is quite sensible of all the difficulties which have arisen from Earl Spencer's removal to the House of Lords, and he is not blind to those which may be anticipated in any attempt to make

such fresh arrangements as shall enable his Majesty's present servants to continue to conduct the affairs of the country. He is quite aware that the Government in its present form was mainly founded upon the personal weight and influence possessed by Earl Spencer in the House of Commons; he cannot help feeling also that the Government exists by the support of that branch only of the Legislature, and therefore that the loss of Viscount Althorp's services in that House must be viewed also in reference to that contingency.' The letter concludes: 'This and other circumstances producing embarrassment, to which the King will not further allude at present, render the whole question one of the most serious import, and one in which friendly and disinterested advice becomes most important, and his Majesty will therefore most readily avail himself of Viscount Melbourne's proposal that he should have with him a full and unreserved communication upon the present state of public affairs, and will receive him at any time at which he may present himself here to-morrow.'

These passages give all that is essential in the history of an event which holds a conspicuous place in our constitutional annals. They fix the character of the interview, and distinctly foreshadow its result. Melbourne drove down to Brighton the next day and had a long conversation with the King. We have the King's own account of it in a memoir which was communicated to Baron Stockmar and is published in his 'Life.' The conversation was 'free, unreserved, and dispassionate.' Lord Melbourne suggested that Lord John Russell should succeed Lord Althorp as leader. The King objected strongly to Lord John Russell, declaring that he had neither the abilities nor the influence which would qualify him for the task, and that 'he would make a

wretched figure when opposed by Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Stanley.' Nothing was concluded that night. Melbourne slept at the Pavilion, and the next morning the King put into his hands a letter in which he stated his opinion that by the removal of Lord Althorp to the House of Peers the weight and consideration of the Government were so much diminished in the House of Commons and in the country at large as to render it impossible that they should continue at the head of public affairs. The letter ended thus : 'His Majesty, therefore, under *this* view, and the apprehension of contingencies which the King has expressed to Lord Melbourne *verbally*, does not think it would be acting *fairly* or honourably by his lordship to call upon the Viscount for the continuance of his services in a position of which the tenure appears to the King to be so precarious.' A conversation followed in which Melbourne ventured to offer some remonstrance on constitutional grounds, but the King waived it impatiently. He offered Melbourne an Earldom and the Garter, which were curtly declined. Begging to know whether he had any further commands, and to whom he should resign his trust, the King told him that he was sending for the Duke of Wellington. The letter to the Duke was already prepared, and at the request of one of the officials Melbourne undertook to see it delivered in London.

The next morning the country had a great surprise. After twelve o'clock, and just as he was going to bed, Melbourne had a call from Lord Brougham. Under the seal of absolute secrecy, Melbourne told him what had happened. Brougham kept his word in his own way. He went straight to the *Times* office and gave the information. The announcement of the dismissal of the ministry appeared

in the issue which was then preparing for the press, with the addition made on the same veracious authority: 'The Queen has done it all.' Melbourne had a delicate task with his colleagues. He had some documentary evidence to show, and it told, as we have seen, its own tale. Writing to Lord John Russell, Althorp said: 'This is the greatest piece of folly ever committed.' He did not say by whom. In the memoir already referred to, the King says he fully believed that Melbourne meant to resign, and it must be admitted that his letter to the King suggests if it does not convey this interpretation. Melbourne put himself into the King's hands. Instead of going to him prepared with advice, which, if refused, should have been followed by his resignation, he went to receive his commands, suggesting at the same time reasons for his own dismissal. The King did what his minister invited him to do, and if there was any straining of constitutional practice, the fault was certainly not wholly on the King's side, but must at any rate be equally divided. Melbourne was safe for the next turn, should it come soon, but his conduct on this critical occasion was never forgotten by his colleagues. They bore it with resignation, and perhaps thought that the result on the whole might be for the best. But one of them was furious. Brougham wrote to Althorp: 'What you and I thought, and all men of sound minds thought, quite impossible, is come to pass, and because—and only because—you are removed from the House of Commons, the King *turns us all out!*—a thing never before done, and without waiting for the House of Commons to express its distrust in Lord John Russell or in us. . . . I have written to the King to throw all the consequences on him and relieve myself.' It was a burden which the King very willingly assumed.

Melbourne's failure must be admitted, and it requires no heroic explanation. It is not to be ascribed to his 'easy temper.' His temper was not easy, but rather keen and warm. The King found it anything but easy at the interview of the 15th, when it glowed and scorched. Nor is it to be set down to any supposed weakness of character. A fair test of the strength of character is to ascertain how much it will bear before giving way. Tried by this test Melbourne comes out well. Earl Grey utterly broke down under one half the difficulties and cares and disappointments against which Melbourne bore up for six years with unflinching fortitude. It would come perhaps a little nearer the mark to say that he had an inbred horror of conventionality. He disliked etiquette and formal ceremonies; he was not always dreaming of his dignity, and he did not care to insist punctiliously on his rights. It was these peculiarities of which his friends were thinking when they heard to their amazement that he did not refuse at once the offer of the Irish Viceroyalty made to him by Earl Grey. It was these same peculiarities that gave such a novel air to his mode of receiving deputations at the Home Office. It was his habit to set aside formalities as so much very emphatic 'nonsense'; he preferred to 'talk over' matters in an easy conversational fashion, that being in his opinion the best way for coming to a speedy understanding. This is the style in which he approached the King when the difficulties caused by the removal of Lord Althorp to the House of Lords had to be dealt with. He knew very well what was fitting and right, and what constitutional practice required, but it was not his humour to act with formal precision. He went to Brighton to 'talk matters over' with the King. He thus placed himself at the King's mercy, and when the note

of the 15th made him sensible of the fault he had committed, he was too sensitive and too proud to redeem the blunder. No trap was set for him, but he unwittingly set one for himself. It must also be said that there was a gentleman on one side, and a king who was not exactly a gentleman on the other. But he brought away with him a lesson which was turned to good account in their further relations. It was the King's first and last victory over Melbourne.

The Duke of Wellington advised the King to send for Sir Robert Peel, who was then at Rome, consenting to take upon himself the charge of the Government till other arrangements could be made. It was the middle of December before Sir Robert reached London, but he then lost no time. He accepted the King's commands, dissolved Parliament, and issued an appeal to the nation in the shape of an address to the electors of Tamworth. For the last four years he had been anxiously watching the signs of a reaction which had to some extent set in, and doing his best to promote it, but it had not yet gone quite so far as he imagined. The elections broke down the magnificent Liberal majority of the previous Parliament, but there was still a majority, varying, as was estimated, from twenty-five to forty votes. At Melbourne's request, made with the full concurrence of his colleagues, Lord John Russell undertook the leadership of the Opposition in the new House. He told Mr. Abercromby, the candidate for the Speakership, that if he was offered the command of the Channel Fleet he would accept it. He afterwards explained, first that he said this in a joke, which may be readily assumed, and next that he said he would not refuse it 'if he thought it his duty to accept,' which robs the saying of all point, since no person is expected to decline a duty. Posterity will adhere with

Sydney Smith to the original version, which ought to be the right one if it is not. In truth, the task he consented to undertake was hardly less arduous to him, with all his talents and experience, than the command of the Channel Fleet would have been to untried hands. The Liberals might count perhaps upon a majority of thirty, but that was taking them altogether, the milk-and-water Whigs at one extreme, the Radicals at the other, and somewhere between them sixty Irish members who might be expected to act with O'Connell. How to marshal these discordant forces was a problem which it required all Lord John Russell's courage and skill to solve. The result did infinite credit to his generalship, and established his reputation on a lasting basis.

He wisely concluded that he could not bring them too soon under fire. The first battle was over the Speakership, for which the Liberals put forward Mr. Abercromby in opposition to Sir C. Manners Sutton, who had held that office in the previous Parliament. It was won by ten votes, but it was fought under extremely unfavourable conditions, one of them being the rival pretensions of Mr. Spring Rice and Mr. Abercromby as Liberal candidates for the post. Nothing can be more dreary or more repulsive than the correspondence in which Melbourne was involved on this subject when so many graver issues were at stake. The next trial of strength was on an amendment to the Address, and the result was worse. The amendment was carried by a majority of only seven votes. It was clear that the contest to be successful must be shifted to higher ground. The question which might be regarded as the dividing line between the two parties was the Irish Church, and more especially the appropriation of a portion of its revenues to

public purposes. A series of resolutions on this subject were carried after strenuous debates by majorities varying from twenty-seven to thirty-three, and Sir Robert Peel threw up the reins.

It was now Melbourne's turn once more. No attempt was made to displace him from his position at the head of the party, beyond a formal appeal to Earl Grey to take the Treasury or the Foreign Office. Melbourne joined in it, no doubt with entire sincerity. He would have been perfectly willing to take office under his former chief. But the appeal was largely a sacrifice to decorum. Lord Palmerston was one who signed the letter to Lord Grey, but with him the offer was restricted to the Treasury. He was resolved not to take any part in the administration unless he was reinstated in his old quarters at the Foreign Office. The King in the first instance sent for Earl Grey, who advised him to send for Melbourne. In point of fact he was the indispensable man. No one else had sympathies broad enough to embrace all sections of the party. No one else had the tact or the patience that would be required to adjust the differences that were sure to arise. The Whigs of course held their own at the centre, but it would be impossible for the Government to command a majority in the House of Commons unless a policy was adopted which would hold all sections together in a working alliance. On this vital matter Earl Grey was hopelessly impracticable. He had taken fright at the sending of invitations to the Irish members to attend a general meeting of the party at Lichfield House. 'There is one point,' he wrote to Lord John Russell, 'on which my opinion and resolution can admit of no change. I have already stated to you and to others, that nothing could induce me to be a party to any-

thing like concert or co-operation with O'Connell and the Radicals.' This is enough to show that he was not the man for the emergency, and he did the best thing it was in his power to do when he advised the King to send for Melbourne.

One other important piece of business had to be disposed of before the preparations for the new administration could be considered complete. It had to be explained to Lord Brougham that he would not be included. On this point Melbourne was quite resolved. He had made up his mind never again to sit with the ex-Chancellor in the same Cabinet. This decision appeared to some of his colleagues one of an almost portentous character. There was a general concurrence in the opinion that his exclusion was desirable, but merely to inform him of the fact would be an act of daring, and it needed still more nerve to face the consequences of his terrible wrath. Melbourne did not hesitate a moment. There are many ways of getting rid of an undesirable colleague. The most common one is to allege some secondary reason, which may be true and valid so far as it goes, but is not the real one. Melbourne told Brougham the exact truth. 'You must be perfectly aware,' he writes, 'that your character and conduct have since November last formed the principal and general topic of debate and discussion. . . . It is a very disagreeable task to have to say to a statesman that his character is injured in the public estimation; it is still more unpleasant to have to add that you consider this his own fault; and it is idle to expect to be able to convince almost any man, and more especially a man of very superior abilities and of unbounded confidence in those abilities, that this is the truth. I must, however, state plainly that your conduct was one of the principal

causes of the dismissal of the late ministry, and that it forms the most popular justification of that step. . . . You are generally for specific charges—*ubi lapsus, quid feci?* Allow me to observe that there may be a course and series of very objectionable conduct, there may be a succession of acts which destroy confidence, and add offence to offence, and yet it may be difficult to point out any great and marked delinquency. I will however tell you fairly that in my opinion you domineered too much, you interfered too much with other departments, you encroached upon the province of the Prime Minister ; you worked, as I believe, with the press, in a manner unbecoming the dignity of your station, and you formed political views of your own, and pursued them by means which were unfair towards your colleagues. . . . I have written this with great pain. I owe it to myself and to you, to truth and fair dealing, to be explicit. I can only add that, whatever may be your determination, no political differences will make any change in the friendship and affection which I have always felt and still continue to feel for you.'

These extracts are especially valuable for the light they shed upon Melbourne's character. They are not such as a weak man would or could have written. If there is one thing more than another which weak men seek to avoid it is the necessity for plain speaking, and when there is no avoiding it they generally go into a passion to keep up their courage. In the course of a long letter Melbourne does not use a single angry word. He states his case with the calmness of a judge, but with a merciless severity which is absolutely crushing. We seem to see him looking straight into his opponent's eyes while he speaks. He makes all fair allowances ; he takes blame to himself for not having

cautioned him in due time, but his obvious desire to be just, and the effort it costs him to speak out at last, only increase the weight of the verdict. His style reflects the temper of his mind. It is measured and stately, and almost solemn. Brougham himself felt the charge to be unanswerable. He never recovered from the blow delivered by this man of 'easy temper,' whom he had fondly hoped to manage and domineer over by the force of bluster. Some years later, in reply to one of his philippics in the House of Lords, Melbourne compressed the whole case into one short and convincing argument. 'My Lords,' he said, 'your lordships have heard the powerful speech of the noble and learned lord, one of the most powerful ever delivered in this House, and I leave your lordships to consider what must be the strength and nature of the objections which prevent any Government from availing themselves of the services of such a man.' Having done his duty fearlessly, Melbourne yielded to the remonstrances which Brougham was neither too strong nor too proud to offer by postponing the appointment of a new Chancellor. For the present the Great Seal was put into commission, and though nothing could abate the stern reality, appearances were soothingly saved.

To the many subjects which have been suggested for historical paintings that have never yet found an artist there would be some reason for adding Lord Melbourne's interview with King William on being summoned a second time to form an administration. It marked the close of a short and keen constitutional struggle, in which the Crown had striven to resume a portion of its disused prerogative and had been signally worsted. It was a humiliation to have to face once more the minister whom he had curtly and arbitrarily dismissed a few months previously. The King

did all he could to avoid the unpleasant alternative. He first had recourse to Earl Grey. The Earl declined office for himself and advised the King to send, not for Melbourne alone, but for Melbourne and Lansdowne. The Earl and the King in present circumstances thought very much alike. The King would have preferred the Duke of Wellington to everybody else, but since this was a dream he would have been well content with Earl Grey. The Earl shared the King's horror of extreme men, and probably coupled Lansdowne with Melbourne in the hope that the pedantic Whiggism of the one would act as some check upon the political catholicity of the other. The King tried to press the same idea. The plan he preferred was a union of the moderate men of the two great parties. It has always been a favourite device of the Crown, which by this means sees a chance of holding the position of managing partner in the national concern. Again, as in the previous year, the suggestion was summarily rejected, and Melbourne was then required to undertake the task alone. In his personal interviews the King was more than civil. He had his sailor manners at hand which served very well as a disguise for his real feelings. But henceforth it was war between him and his ministers, with only such variations as were due to the moods and whims of a capricious temper. The necessary negotiations were carried on chiefly by correspondence. Melbourne took care that this time there should be no mistake. In a very able State paper he explained to the King the conditions on which he consented to undertake the Premiership. They included some control over the household appointments, power to create peers in order to hold in check the domineering majority in the Upper House, a repudiation of the principle of exclusion on the score of creed or of politics in

the filling of administrative offices, and, above everything else, a frank acceptance of the policy of the new Government on the Irish Church. On this last point the King hesitated. Like his father and his brother, he pleaded his conscience, and begged that it might be submitted to the fifteen judges how far he was bound by his coronation oath. Melbourne refused to admit of such an appeal, and at last the King gave in.

The special note of the new administration was its liberal policy as regards Ireland. The legislative measures it had in view with respect to the Irish Church and the Irish tithes were well known, but the character of its appointments and the spirit in which the Government would be conducted were even more important. In this direction the chief thing wanted was to give loyal effect to the Catholic Emancipation Act. Melbourne would have gladly given the Irish Attorney-Generalship to O'Connell, who was ready to accept it, and believed that it would be offered to him, but public feeling furnished an insuperable obstacle. O Connell was bitterly disappointed, but he took no offence. He showed a wonderful magnanimity, as Lord John Russell, one of his severest judges, confesses. Melbourne did what he could. The highest office at the Irish bar was given to Mr. Perrin, a Protestant indeed, but one whose impartiality was above suspicion; while Mr. O'Loghlen, a Catholic and one of O'Connell's closest friends, was made Solicitor-General, the first time for a century and a half that a Catholic had held the office. A change for the better was begun at Dublin Castle, by the removal of Sir W. Gosset from the post of Under-Secretary, and the appointment in his stead of Mr. Thomas Drummond, the distinguished man who ventured to remind the landlords of Ireland that 'property has

its duties as well as its rights.' Orders were given to include Catholics in the Sheriff lists, to appoint a fair proportion of Catholic solicitors as local prosecutors for the Crown, and to exclude zealous Orangemen from the constabulary. As regards Orangemen, more energetic measures were soon deemed necessary. They had long been in the ascendant at the Castle. It was in the spirit they breathed and fostered that the government of Ireland had been carried on ever since the Union. They were beginning to infect the army. It was discovered on inquiry, that under warrants signed by the Duke of Cumberland, the King's brother, Orange lodges had been established in thirty or forty regiments. It was time that the power of this intolerant and insolent faction should be broken, and Mr. Hume took up the task. He moved an address to the Crown praying for the removal of all officials, civil or military, who attended the meetings of the Orange lodges, or of any other political club. The Government adopted the motion in a slightly amended form. The words employed were perhaps a little too wide, but their meaning was well understood, and the form adopted made the address less unpalatable to the King. These changes in the administration of the law gave immense satisfaction in Ireland. They presented a striking contrast to the policy hitherto pursued. During his own short Chief-Secretaryship Melbourne had groaned and fumed at the restrictions by which his action was fettered, and he viewed with repugnance and regret the course adopted by Mr. Stanley under the Premiership of Earl Grey. At both those periods he was practically helpless. Now he was in power with colleagues who shared his sentiments, and Ireland for the first time since the Union began to believe in a reign of justice.

The details of the Melbourne administration are beside our aim. They belong to the history of the country, and a brief reference will suffice. The short session of 1835 was turned to good account. The Municipal Corporations Bill passed after a struggle with the Lords which, thanks to the firmness of the Government, left its most important features unchanged. An Irish Bill framed on the same lines was thrown out by the Lords, and a Bill for the settlement of the Irish tithe question was so mangled by them that it had to be abandoned. They accepted one half, but rejected the other, the rejected half relating to the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Church to public purposes. The next session was crowded with important work. It included the commutation of tithe in England and Wales, the civil registration of births and deaths, and a measure enabling marriages to be performed elsewhere than in the churches of the Establishment. A series of Bills was also introduced for giving effect to the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, one providing for the equalisation of episcopal incomes; another for applying the surplus income of capitular establishments to the general purposes of the Church, and a third discouraging pluralities. The first was passed at once, the other two in 1838 and 1839. Justice has hardly been done to these measures. They were framed and carried by Lord John Russell, and his biographer, Mr. Spencer Walpole, in referring to them is well justified in the remark that 'Lord John might fairly claim that if he had done more to satisfy Dissent than any statesman since the days of Nottingham, he had done more to strengthen the Church than any minister since the days of Godolphin.' He was less fortunate with his Irish measures. The Irish Municipal Corporation Bill and the Tithe Bill were again

sent up to the Lords, and again thrown back on his hands.

During the earlier part of the year, Melbourne was burdened with other cares in addition to those of politics. He was involved in a social misadventure which caused him much distress and threatened to becloud his reputation. Unfortunately, it was not the first of the kind which had befallen him. Soon after his return from Ireland, in 1829, he was sued in an action for damages by Lord Brandon, for undue intimacy with Lady Brandon, whose acquaintance he had made in Dublin. Lord Tenterden, who tried the case, held that there was no evidence to go to the jury, and directed a non-suit. Lord Brandon then went into the Ecclesiastical Court, where his failure was even more complete. His own counsel thought fit to withdraw the case. In his second misadventure the ordeal was more severe.

The present generation retains some recollection of the Hon. Mrs. Norton. She is remembered chiefly for the wrongs which, as was publicly alleged, she suffered from her husband, who, availing himself of the unjust law then in force as regards the property of married women, stepped in between her and her publishers, and strove to intercept the fruits of her literary toil. All the world heard of her wrongs, and pitied her. Perhaps the only service her husband rendered to society was to force the inequitable state of the law upon public attention, and pave the way for its amendment. He was the brother and heir-presumptive to Lord Grantley, and grandson of the first Lord Grantley, who, as Sir Fletcher Norton, was for many years Speaker of the House of Commons. As the grand-daughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Mrs. Norton belonged to a family in

which genius has been hereditary. They were married in 1827, they moved in society, their income was not more than adequate to their position, and Mrs. Norton betook herself to her pen. When Melbourne was at the Home Office it probably occurred to both that something might be looked for in the way of patronage. He knew her father and her grandfather, and he had places at his disposal. Accordingly, Mrs. Norton wrote to him asking for some appointment for her husband for which he might be deemed suitable. If the terms of the application had been strictly construed, it might perhaps have met with a refusal, but that was impossible. Mr. Norton had been called to the bar, and though he had held but few briefs, he might do very well for a magistrate. Melbourne, at any rate, thought so, and appointed him to a vacancy in one of the London police courts. He met with his due reward. Mr. Norton was lazy, quarrelsome, and inefficient. But Melbourne found a strong attraction in the society of Mrs. Norton. It would have been strange if he had not, for she was a woman of brilliant gifts, admired, applauded, and caressed by all who had the privilege of her acquaintance. Her literary tastes fell in with his. He occasionally met people at her house whom it was interesting to know. Among others he met Mr. Disraeli, then a rising star in the fashionable world, and heard from him with puzzled amazement the no doubt humorous avowal that he wanted to be Prime Minister of England. It is no wonder that he found some solace in such a home. But there were dangers in the path which a man of his knowledge of the world, and with previous experience to warn him, might have foreseen. Domestic broils began; husband and wife quarrelled; suspicion, real or pretended, crept in, charges at first general, and then very

specific, were alleged, till at last Melbourne was made defendant in an action for damages.

It would be unpardonable to rake up the details of an obsolete scandal. From what has been said, everything of importance can be inferred. The facts speak for themselves, and speak, perhaps, too unfavourably for Melbourne. Due allowance being made for all the circumstances, the conclusion at first suggested may be, as it was held to be, altogether wrong. The letters written at the time certainly favour that impression. The affair naturally caused a great sensation. The Prime Minister was on his trial, and if the verdict went against him, he would have to resign. Melbourne offered to resign at once; but the King would not hear of it, and the Duke of Wellington is said to have declared that he would be no party to any arrangements which such a step would involve. It is not, perhaps, from them that one would expect a deliverance superheated by any extreme sensitiveness on the score of morals, but greater confidence may be placed in the decision of the jury. The case came on for trial in the Court of King's Bench, before Mr. Justice Tindal. It was a question of character and credibility on the part of the witnesses. Sir John Campbell, the Attorney-General, led for the defence, and after a brief summing up, the jury gave a verdict of acquittal without leaving the box. There was great applause in Court and among the crowd outside, and it probably was not wholly the applause of partisans. Decent people of all classes and parties must have felt it a relief that the Prime Minister had come out of the ordeal unscathed. This is the impression conveyed by Greville. 'The town,' he says, 'has been full of Melbourne's trial; great exultation at the result on the part of his political adherents, great disappointment on that of the mob of

low Tories, and a creditable satisfaction among the better sort ; it was, in point of fact, a very triumphant acquittal.' 'The King,' he adds, 'behaved very civilly about it, and expressed his satisfaction at the result in terms sufficiently flattering to Melbourne.'

The King was generally civil to Melbourne. He probably liked him better than any of his other ministers. To some of them he took great pains to be uncivil, and his hostility to the Government, as a whole, could hardly brook concealment. The consequences of his own great blunder in dismissing a ministry which had the support of the House of Commons were always rankling in his mind. He had been forced to take them back, and this was a humiliation which he could not forgive. It made him irritable and peevish, and he took his revenge in all manner of odd ways. For some time he made a point of inviting none of them to dinner. Then he would relent, at least for a moment, and send word that he expected those who attended the council to dine with him and 'drink two bottles of wine a man.' He was on the watch for every fancied slight to his prerogative. One day Lord Palmerston was the offender because he took steps to ascertain whether Lord Durham would be acceptable as ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg before mentioning his name to the King. Another day Lord John Russell was in disgrace because he introduced the Irish Corporation Bill into the House of Commons without having first submitted the heads of the measure to his Majesty. Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, was a constant butt for the King's ill-will because he was supposed to be in favour of bestowing some measure of self-government upon the Canadians. The Bill for the abolition of church rates excited his apprehensions. It was hostile to

the interests of the Church and called for serious remonstrance. Whenever he was annoyed he poured forth his complaints to Melbourne; sometimes through his private secretary, sometimes in long letters of his own. Melbourne showed wonderful patience under these inflictions. His method was always the same. He identified himself with his colleagues, assumed entire responsibility for what had been done, and gave soothing explanations which usually brought back a friendly reply. An angry tirade aimed at Lord Glenelg at a meeting of the council demanded firmer treatment. In a memorandum presented to him on behalf of the Cabinet, Melbourne told the King some plain truths, and the rebuke had some effect. There were reasons for treating him with forbearance. His health was giving way, and he was not always master of himself. His conduct at times was hardly consonant with perfect sanity, and he rated some of the members of his own family, especially the Duchess of Kent, even worse than he did his ministers. Good-nature and humanity pleaded for large allowance.

Whatever difficulties Melbourne and his colleagues had with the King, those they encountered with the House of Lords were far greater. The schism between that assembly and the House of Commons, which has lasted till our days, began with the passing of the Reform Bill, and it was more bitter and more exasperating under the Melbourne administration than it has ever been since. At the instigation of Lord Lyndhurst, the Tory peers, who were in an overwhelming majority, systematically threw out the Government Bills, or amended them in a way which was equivalent to rejection. The Irish Corporation Bill and the Irish Tithe Bill were thrown out session after session. 'The Lords have been bowling down Bills like ninepins,' says Greville,

Lord Howick said to him as they rode in the Park that he supposed the Government must go out at the end of the session, and that they ought to go out, since they could carry none of their measures. 'It was quite impossible,' he added, 'that things could go on upon their present footing; the country would not stand it, and the Lords must look for those changes which their own conduct rendered indispensable.' Lord John Russell proposed to Melbourne that they should at once create eight, ten, or twelve peers, and that the ministry should be prepared to advise a similar creation 'whenever it was provoked.' The object of the Tory peers was to discredit the Government with the country—and to some extent they succeeded, but indirectly they succeeded still more effectually in alienating from the Government their Radical supporters by forcing upon them ignominious concessions and compromises. They agreed to drop the Appropriation clause, thus abandoning the very principle on which they had taken office. They staked their existence on the passing of the Irish Corporation Bill, which had been again introduced. It was again rejected, and they still went on. The end seemed to be very near when the Church Rate Abolition Bill escaped defeat in the House of Commons by only five votes. At last, after many humiliations, they were making up their minds to resign, when the state of the King's health gave them something more than an excuse for postponing that step a little longer, and they were soon able to count upon the better chances which might be offered by a new reign.

CHAPTER XI

REGIUS PROFESSOR

The Queen's accession—Peculiarities of the new reign—A youthful sovereign—Guidance and instruction needed—Lord Melbourne undertakes the task—How he discharged it—His devotion and self-denial—Melbourne and Baron Stockmar—The Coronation—The Court and the Whigs—The Bedchamber squabble—Chivalry and office—Melbourne's Church patronage—The Deanery of Exeter—Arnold and Thirlwall—At Court with Robert Owen.

AT twenty minutes past two on the morning of June 20, 1837, the King died, and the present auspicious reign began. To us who look back upon that eventful day from a distance of more than fifty years, its incidents seem tinged with the colours of romance. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham, travelling from Windsor, reached Kensington Palace, where the Princess Victoria was residing, about five o'clock, and desired to see 'the Queen.' 'Presently,' says Mr. Greville, 'she appeared, wrapped in a dressing-gown, and with slippers on her naked feet.' In a few words Lord Conyngham announced his errand. No sooner had he uttered the words 'your Majesty,' than she put out her hand, intimating that he should kiss hands before proceeding further, which, dropping on one knee, he did, and then told the particulars of the King's death. The Archbishop went through the same ceremony, and gave the Queen the benefit of a short homily. At eleven the Queen

met her Privy Council. The scene has often been depicted by pen and pencil, and it is one that will never lose its charm. A few sentences from the narrative of Mr. Greville, who looked on with official eyes, will enable us to realise it vividly. 'When the Lords were assembled, the Lord President informed them of the King's death, and suggested that, as they were so numerous, a few of them should repair to the presence of the Queen and inform her of the event, and that their lordships were assembled in consequence; and accordingly the two royal Dukes, the two Archbishops, the Chancellor, and Melbourne went with him. The Queen received them in the adjoining room alone. As soon as they had returned the proclamation was read and the usual order passed, when the doors were thrown open and the Queen entered, accompanied by her two uncles, who advanced to meet her. She bowed to the Lords, took her seat, and then read her speech in a clear, distinct, and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or embarrassment. She was quite plainly dressed, and in mourning. After she had read her speech and taken and signed the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland, the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two royal Dukes first by themselves; and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging; she kissed them both, and rose from her chair and moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was furthest from her and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn, and who came one after another

to kiss her hand, but she did not speak to anybody, nor did she make the slightest difference in her manner, or show any in her countenance to any individual of any rank, station, or party. I particularly watched her when Melbourne and the Ministers, and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and engaging. When the business was done she retired as she had entered, and I could see that nobody was in the adjoining room.'

The King's death, though decorously and no doubt sincerely deplored in official speeches, was a fortunate event for the Melbourne administration. It gave them a new lease of life. There was an end to the hostility on the part of the sovereign which had been encountered throughout the previous reign, and had at last become almost intolerable. Everything was smooth at court. The Queen was too young to have imbibed any political prejudices, and such predilections as she might have begun to form were naturally in favour of her present advisers. With such cheerful prospects before them, they had fresh reasons for desiring to remain in office, and, what was perhaps of greater importance, they had a plausible defence for showing some anxiety to remain. It was easy and even graceful to say that they thought less of themselves than of the duties they owed to their youthful sovereign, and that they were willing to incur some reproach rather than subject her to the inconvenience of a change of ministers on the very threshold of her reign. Similar motives told with the Opposition. Eager as they were for power,

and full as was their persuasion that they had a moral right to it, they could not but feel that it would be more becoming to postpone their claims. There ought at any rate to be no change till after the coronation. Nevertheless, the elections were fought with great asperity. The Whigs, and even the Radicals, were willing to make all the capital they could out of the new reign. The people were congratulated from the hustings on the defeat of Orange plots, which, had they succeeded, might have plunged the country into civil war and placed the hated Duke of Cumberland on the throne. It was a two-edged sword to fight with: one better suited, perhaps, to factious than to patriotic purposes, and the Tories, in seeking to return blow for blow, were almost driven into disloyalty. Nor was the result so favourable as ministers had allowed themselves to expect. Their majority in the new Parliament was not increased, and their hold on power had not ceased to be precarious.

For us, the most remarkable feature of the new reign was the unique position in which it placed Lord Melbourne. No such lot as his had ever fallen to any statesman in the whole course of our history. The Queen was but eighteen when she ascended the throne. She was just old enough to escape a regency. As only heiress-presumptive, whose claims might at any moment be set aside by the birth of a direct heir, her position had not been sufficiently considered. It was a subject which ministers would naturally feel some difficulty in pressing upon the King, even if he could have been made to comprehend the importance of affording to his probable successor advantages which he had not received himself. The education of our future Queen was left in the hands of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, with the Baroness Lehzen, the daughter of a Hanoverian clergyman, as her

chief instructress. More adequate provision might have been made if the Queen's accession had been deferred a few years, but any such arrangement was foreclosed by events, and, if some advantages were thereby forfeited, it may be also said that no risks were run. The Queen was spared the doubtful lessons in kingcraft which were impressed upon the youthful mind of her royal grandfather under the influence of Lord Bute. It was perhaps a piece of good fortune that she had to learn her duties as a constitutional sovereign from the responsible ministers of the Crown, and it was equally their good fortune that they had such promising materials to work upon—a quick sense of duty, an unsophisticated intelligence, and a heart without guile.

There had been four Queens regnant in England before Victoria, but the circumstances of none of them at the period of their accession to the throne resembled hers. The two Stuart Queens were of mature years and married, one of them to the greatest statesman of his time, who reigned with equal right, and in whom all the executive functions of the crown were vested by Act of Parliament. The two Tudors were unmarried, but they also were of ripe age, and well fitted by the wonderful vicissitudes through which they had passed to stand alone. Elizabeth was the youngest of the four, but she had an intimate knowledge of the politics and leading personages of the day, and experience had made her a statesman. For some years it had been her chief business to keep her head on her shoulders. She had been inside the Tower, and but for her consummate prudence she would have been taken to Tower Hill. In these respects Queen Victoria offered a striking contrast to her predecessors. She was but a girl in years, and knew nothing of

politics except by rumour. She had been kept, perhaps, too carefully under her mother's wings, never allowed to sleep except in the same room, nor to see any person unless her mother or the Baroness Lehzen were present. A nursery would have afforded more freedom and a wider range of observation, and the transition from such a condition of artificial pupilage to one in which more than the independence of womanhood and the dignity and responsibilities of a sovereign were acquired at once was a change which it is hard to realise. Perhaps no woman in the world's history ever experienced such a change before; certainly none could have passed through it more triumphantly.

But to offer a chance of this result there was much that needed doing, and it had to be done informally and in the most delicate manner. The Queen could not be left to grope her way alone through the difficulties of her new position. To instruct her in its technical duties was an easy matter—a month's experience would suffice for that. But it was desirable that she should understand her duties in a much larger sense; that she should learn something of the history and principles of the constitution, that she should know the several parts assigned to the Lords, the Commons, and the Crown, and the practical, as distinct from the theoretic, relations in which they stood to each other. No pedagogue could do this. A professor from one of the Universities might have taught her the letter of the constitution in a course of morning lessons, but he would probably have failed to convey along with it that informing and quickening spirit without which the letter profiteth nothing, or leads to mischief. It was suggested that the Queen should be furnished with a private secretary, after the example of her uncles, who should assist her in routine

duties and offer occasional advice, but it was felt that any such arrangement would be inadequate, and for many reasons undesirable. The position and qualifications of the Prime Minister supplied an easier solution of the difficulty. Melbourne had, in fact, already undertaken the task. The Queen naturally looked to him for advice not only on matters of State, but on what was expected from her in discharging the everyday functions of royalty. He thus slid by degrees into an office without a name which combined in itself the duties of private secretary and tutor. They were distinct from those which belonged to him as the head of the Government, and he knew how to keep them well apart. The disinterestedness, the self-negation, the absolute loyalty with which he acquitted himself in this delicate position were admitted by those of his eminent contemporaries who were best qualified to form an opinion. It is a remarkable tribute to his character that his political rivals regarded him without jealousy or an atom of suspicion. There were some mutterings of discontent among inferior men, but no dissatisfaction was expressed by Wellington or Peel. They knew that he had undertaken a difficult but indispensable task, one which was imposed upon him by the position he occupied, and of which they themselves when they came into office would reap the benefit. He was a Whig no doubt, perhaps he was something less; but at any rate he was an honest-hearted Englishman, in no merely conventional sense a gentleman, in whose perfect honour no one hesitated to place entire reliance.

Melbourne had not the field all to himself. The King of the Belgians, sympathising with the loneliness of his niece, to whom he stood almost in the position of a natural guardian, and feeling the need of supplying her with trusty

counsel, had sent over his confidential agent, Baron Stockmar, to act as his personal representative with the Queen. The King was too wise to take this step without the previous knowledge and sanction of the Queen's ministers, and they could hardly refuse their assent. Nevertheless, the presence of a foreigner at Court in the quality of private adviser to the Queen could not be quite to their taste. Considering our insular prejudices, it was a rather hazardous experiment, and if it had been generally known there might have been a storm. They acted with great discretion. They raised no objection to Baron Stockmar's mission, but they took care to establish an equipoise. Melbourne was the necessary complement of Stockmar, and he proved more than the complement. The Baron was of course treated with deference, and he no doubt found ample opportunities for the display of that oracular wisdom which he took to be his special gift, but with a girl of eighteen he stood no chance against a man like Melbourne. The Prime Minister was fifty-eight years of age, a man of the world and at the same time the soul of honour. His temperament was sympathetic, he had a passion for female society, and he had no one of his own to love. He was devotedly attached to the Queen. He regarded her with almost parental affection, and for her sake accustomed himself to a mode of life which in other circumstances would have been felt as an intolerable 'bore.' His manner to the Queen was marked by the most respectful deference. Without a trace of obsequiousness his demeanour had all the effect of the most winning and graceful flattery, differing from it only in being perfectly sincere. The discipline was morally useful to him in many ways. It obliged him to prune his

speech of all needless expletives. In the Queen's presence he took care to speak only the Queen's English.

In the memoirs of Baron Stockmar we find some references to Melbourne which illustrate the footing on which they stood with each other. The Baron's biographer explains that the purely personal affairs of the Queen were under the care of the Baroness Lehzen, and that in regard to affairs of State, properly speaking, the functions of a private secretary were in part replaced by the Premier, Lord Melbourne, 'who gave himself up in a far greater degree than a Premier is wont to do to personal intercourse with the Queen,' and in consequence of this took 'a considerable share in the discussion of her non-political affairs.' There still remained a gap, it is further said, inasmuch as it was not everything that could be settled in the way of direct intercourse between the Queen and her ministers, especially between the Queen and the Premier. 'It was necessary in such cases that there should be a go-between, especially at first, when so many matters wholly new and unknown to the Queen came on for discussion.' This 'gap,' we are told, was for fifteen months filled in by Stockmar. Whether there was any such 'gap,' except in the Baron's imagination, or whether he filled it, is a question not to be decided by his biographer. Melbourne lived at the Castle. He was in constant attendance upon the Queen. At his farewell interview with her, on the fall of his ministry, he could say that for the previous four years he had seen her every day. Every morning after breakfast he took her the despatches to read. After lunch he almost invariably rode out with her, one of a numerous cavalcade, but taking his place next to her. At dinner in the evening he was always present when his Parliamentary duties permitted, and his seat at table was

next to hers, on the left. It was a permanent arrangement. He took in the lady-in-waiting in order that he might sit next the Queen, and if public business required his temporary absence the place was kept vacant for him. It is not easy to see where any 'gap' could exist between the Queen and Melbourne, and we may take it for granted that there was none. Stockmar's biographer says: 'Lord Melbourne was strongly devoted to the Queen, and even warmly attached to her personally. He initiated her in public affairs in the most easy and kindly manner. She, on the other hand, placed in him an almost filial confidence.'

On one point, we are told, Stockmar had many a dispute with Melbourne. He thought he found in him too great an inclination to yield to party interests, not because Melbourne was himself a partisan, but from too readily complying with the wishes of his supporters. Hence, 'in the momentary advantage which a measure might bring to the Whigs and the minister,' he sometimes overlooked 'the possible lasting damage which it might inflict upon the Queen and the Crown.' The criticism merely shows that Stockmar did not understand, as he never could be made to understand, the nature of Parliamentary government; while the supposition that the Queen and the Crown were dearer to him than to Melbourne is rather grotesque. Stockmar thought that Melbourne failed to impress 'upon his illustrious pupil the great maxim that she was the Queen of the entire people, and that it was her duty to hold herself free from the bonds of any party,' instead of appearing to be only 'the Queen of the Whigs.' Stockmar did not perceive how far it is the duty of the Crown in a constitutional system to identify itself with the party in power, which is held to represent the entire people, and that both parties have the

privilege of basking in turn in the sunshine of the Court. During Stockmar's fifteen months' residence at Windsor there may have been some undue 'neglect of the Tories in invitations and social civilities,' and there was some excuse for it in the unbroken monopoly they had enjoyed during the three previous reigns. It was a novelty for a Whig to find himself at Windsor. But Melbourne was utterly free from the vice of political sectarianism, and as soon as political circumstances foreboded a change he honourably did his best to prepare the Queen for a return of the Tories to power. Stockmar's presence at Windsor, ensconced in permanent domicile, was some inconvenience to Melbourne. It exposed him to misconstructions. 'King Leopold and Stockmar,' he said on one occasion, 'are very good and intelligent people, but I dislike very much to hear my friends say that I am influenced by them. We know it is not true but still I dislike to hear it said.' To Stockmar he was always civil, and he spoke of him in terms of appreciation which he knew would be grateful to the Queen. Stockmar repaid his courtesy by giving him the nickname of 'the Pococurante.'

In due time the Queen was crowned. Happily we have among our recent memories an event which eclipses the splendour of her coronation. It is lost in the stately magnificence of her jubilee, and in the sentiments of loyalty and gratitude and chastened pride which it called forth in all parts of the land. When the coronation was over politics took a more wilful and acrid turn. The ministry were weak. They had chiefly in hand the remanets of Irish legislation. 'It seems to me' said Lord Holland, 'that we have nothing to depend upon but the Queen and Paddy;' and this was about the truth. Lord John Russell's disinclina-

tion to countenance any further extension of Parliamentary Reform gave great offence to his more advanced adherents, and they were not unwilling to leave him occasionally in the lurch. He was becoming unpopular, and the reputation of the Government was visibly on the wane. The climax was reached when Lord John published a letter to his constituents setting forth the reasons which made it impossible for him to sanction any further change. 'In introducing the Reform Act,' he wrote, 'the organs of the Government declared in the name of that Government that it was intended as the permanent settlement of a great constitutional question. If after these declarations any member of Lord Grey's Cabinet were to propose to begin the whole question anew, the obvious remark would be, "you have either so egregiously deceived us that we cannot trust to your public engagements, or you have so blindly deceived yourself that we cannot believe in the solidity of your new scheme."' That such a man should have considered such an argument conclusive is a striking illustration of the change that has taken place in the point of view from which politics are regarded, and there were some who did not accept it as conclusive then. 'Sound and temperate,' is Mr. Greville's comment, 'will be a bitter pill to the Radicals, and a source of vexation to his own people.' It went through three editions in a couple of days, but retribution was not long in coming. On the day it was published the House of Commons went into committee on the Jamaica Bill. The Jamaica House of Assembly was in the hands of the planters, and its policy in dealing with the negroes called imperatively for interference. The Government proposal was that the constitution of the colony should be suspended for five years. They expected a majority of twenty, but when the

division took place some days later they found themselves with a majority of only five, and at once determined to resign. Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell communicated their decision to the Queen. It is stated by Mr. Greville, on the authority, as Mr. Walpole supposes, of Lord Tavistock, that throughout the interview the Queen 'was dissolved in tears.'

This incident is at least in keeping with the romantic but very unpolitical episode which followed. On the advice of Melbourne the Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, who in turn advised her to send for Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert was quite prepared to form an administration, but he submitted to the Queen as a condition that there should be some change in the ladies of the household. The Queen took alarm. It was enough to have to part with Melbourne, but to surrender at the bidding of a Prime Minister her female associates and friends and to accept strangers of his dictating was more than she could bear, and she referred the question to her advisers. A cabinet council was called and a minute drawn up embodying their opinion : 'The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel to remove the ladies of her bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings.' The communication of this minute to Sir Robert Peel put an end to the negotiations, and ministers resumed office. The affair cannot be considered very creditable to either party. The feelings of the Queen were natural enough, and readily command sympathy, but men of fifty ought to have been able to take a calmer view of the circumstances. On constitutional grounds the question settles itself. A Prime Minister is free to stipulate for what-

ever terms he thinks necessary, and the sovereign must assent to them or dispense with his services. It was not an unreasonable condition to exact that while the Tories took charge of the Government in the Queen's name the ladies of great Whig lords should not stand guard over the royal closet. It is wonderful how much chivalry the Queen's ministers displayed. Even men like Earl Grey and Earl Spencer declared that it was their duty to stand by the Queen. A misunderstanding was afterwards alleged which may or may not have existed. What cannot be doubted is that it was necessary to come to some arrangement, and two years later the question was settled in the sense for which Sir Robert Peel contended.

Probably there mingled with these chivalrous inspirations in the cause of their royal mistress a secret indisposition, stronger than they could have been willing to confess or were perhaps conscious of, to abandon the sweets of office. So far as material advantages were concerned it may be confidently said that Melbourne thought more of others than of himself. But he could not help caring for others. It was a genuine pleasure to him to be able to do anybody a good turn, and if he could be of any service to his friends by remaining in office, that, it is to be feared, would have weighed with him as a sufficient motive. When the duty of resignation was forced upon him, with yet some room for choice, he counted up, it is said, two hundred people who would suffer in their worldly circumstances if he took that step. He thought tenderly of those who liked to keep a brougham and would have to surrender the luxury if he ceased to be Prime Minister. This was anything but heroic on his part, but it was typical of his character, which was kind and genial, deriving some colour from the maxim 'live and let

live,' and on a level with ordinary human nature. He was free from the conceit which might have led him to imagine that his retention of office was of supreme importance to the world, and he would probably not have owned to himself that it mattered very much to the nation whether he or Sir Robert Peel was at the head of affairs. He would perhaps have said that neither the one nor the other would stray very far from the beaten path which public opinion had marked out, and that which of them it should be might be left to circumstances. This view determined the character of his motives, which were not exalted, though they were not sordid, and were more disinterested than some which wear a fairer show. He was no doubt reluctant to quit Windsor. He found there a sphere of happiness and of duty which no man was better fitted to fill, and for which the whole of his previous life had been a preparation. 'Month after month,' writes Mr. Greville, 'he remains at the Castle, submitting to this daily routine; of all men he appeared to be the last to be broken in to the trammels of a Court, and never was such a revolution seen in any one's occupations and habits. Instead of indolently sprawling in all the attitudes of luxurious ease, he is always sitting bolt upright; his free and easy language interlarded with "damns" is carefully guarded and regulated with the strictest propriety, and he has exchanged the good talk of Holland House for the trivial, laboured, and wearisome inanities of the Royal circle.'

As the chief purveyor of patronage in Church and State he had more embarrassing duties to perform. We take some illustrations from his papers, which Mr. Sanders has edited with so much care and skill. He 'carefully preserved all applications for appointments and promotions, and his refusals of demands which he thought unworthy of con-

sideration were couched in terms of crushing severity. There was a familiar reply of his to an earl soliciting a marquisate, which began, "My dear ——, how can you be such a d—— fool?" Of another seeker of honours and rewards he asked, "Confound it, does he want a Garter for his other leg?" To a colonial governor who wished to take a title reminiscent of his administration he wrote, "Is it not too much like Scipio Africanus?" He was perhaps especially irreverent in the case of bishops. "D—— it," he has been heard to say, "another bishop dead." He thought bishops died on purpose to plague him, and he is reported to have said that he never knew a sleepless night except when he had to fill up some episcopal vacancy. His theological reading is believed to have been extensive, but he began it rather late in life, probably to qualify himself for making his ecclesiastical appointments. The following is addressed to Lord John Russell, whose brother, the Rev. Lord Wriothesley Russell, was apparently a candidate for the Deanery of Exeter, where the arch-foe of Liberalism, Dr. Philpott, was bishop: "I believe that I have been misinformed after all about the Deanery of Exeter, and that it is in the gift of the Crown. There is much application for it, and —— writes in the greatest anxiety, saying that they want a man of the firmest character and the greatest abilities to cope with that devil of a bishop, who inspires more terror than ever Satan did. If it is in the gift of the crown Wrio shall have it, and I wish you would write and tell him so. I think his aristocratic name and title will be of advantage to him in his contest with the Prince of Darkness, of whom, however, it must be said that he is a gentleman."'

Some years previously he had asked Archbishop Whately whether Arnold was open to reasonable objection

on the ground of heterodoxy in his works. The Archbishop replied, 'Certainly not,' but thought it right to add that the 'imputation of heresy' was likely to be kept up and urged as in the case of Dr. Hampden, and on very similar grounds. In 1840 Arnold's name came up again, and Melbourne writes thus to the Bishop of Norwich: 'I return you Arnold's letters. With respect to the immediate object, the Act of last session has annexed this canonry of Christchurch which has just fallen vacant, to the Margaret Professorship of Divinity. I have, as you know, a high opinion of Arnold, which has been raised still higher by the affair of the Wardenship of Manchester (refused by Arnold), but Dr. Arnold has published some indiscreet opinions. I call them indiscreet because they have, as it appears to me, without any adequate reason or object, impaired his own utility, and these opinions would, I own, render me unwilling to name him for a professorship of divinity or any science connected with divinity, in the University of Oxford.' He writes to the same bishop on another subject: 'The incumbent of Woodbridge is anxious to exchange benefices with the incumbent of Methwold, both in your diocese. Do you think this ought to be done, and would the arrangement have your approbation and sanction? I do not much like myself this chopping and changing of livings. A clergyman should take his parish as a husband does his wife, for better or worse, and not be seeking separation on any small disgust, or for any petty reason, such as climate, bad neighbourhood, quarrelling with parishioners. The liberty of divorce would in both cases lead to dissolution of the connection for any and every trifling reason.'

The most important of Melbourne's episcopal appoint-

ments was that of Dr. Connop Thirlwall to the diocese of St. David's. Thirlwall had long laboured under a suspicion of heresy. When a fellow and tutor of Trinity he had published a pamphlet in favour of admitting Dissenters to the university, and the censures it drew upon him from Dr. Wordsworth, then master of the college, led him to resign. He had since published a translation of Schleiermacher's Gospel of St. Luke, and joined Julius Hare in translating Niebuhr's 'History of Rome.' He held the college living of Kirby Lonsdale when Melbourne searched him out, and a letter asking him to call upon the Prime Minister found him on his rambles at a village inn. The story of the interview is told by Mr. Torrens: 'He called at South Street, as he had been asked to do, and on finding that the minister had not yet risen was about to leave his card, when he was told that directions had been given that he was to be shown in whenever he happened to come. Melbourne was in bed, surrounded with letters and newspapers. "Very glad to see you (he began); sit down, sit down; hope you are come to say you accept. I only wish you to understand that I don't intend, if I know it, to make a heterodox bishop—I don't like heterodox bishops. As men they may be very good anywhere else, but I think they have no business on the Bench. I take great interest," he continued, "in theological questions, and I have read a good deal of those old fellows, pointing to a pile of folio editions of the Fathers. They are excellent reading and very amusing; some time or other we must have a talk about them. I sent your edition of Schleiermacher to Lambeth, and asked the Primate to tell me candidly what he thought of it—and look, here are his notes on the margin, pretty copious, you see. He does not concur in all your opinions, but he

says there is nothing heterodox in your book?" Thirlwall frankly responded to the appeal thus made to his honour, Melbourne was satisfied, the appointment was confirmed, and few men have conferred greater dignity on the Bench.'

Heterodoxy, if not of too strong a flavour, might at least be tolerated, but there were extremes from which public opinion recoiled, and Melbourne was held to have gone to the furthest limit, and some leagues beyond, when he presented Robert Owen to the Queen. Melbourne had made his acquaintance many years before. We have seen him at the Home Office in connection with the movement for the release of the Dorsetshire labourers. His educational experiments at New Lanark earned for him a reputation for philanthropy which nothing that he afterwards said or did could be held to forfeit. The Duke of Kent, the Queen's father, visited him at New Lanark, and afterwards corresponded with him on the most confidential terms. Owen had since imbibed extreme opinions, and had made himself the scarecrow of the religious world.' He had his schemes for the regeneration of society which he propagated with the zeal of an apostle. They were wild and pernicious, but his motives were pure. A more amiable and benevolent man never lived. He called upon Melbourne with a petition which he desired to present to the Queen, and asked to be presented for that purpose at an approaching levée. Melbourne consented. When the occasion came Owen knelt before the Queen, attired in 'bag wig and sword,' the petition was handed over to the Secretary of State, and probably no mortal ever read a word of it. But a dreadful deed was done. The religious and respectable world took deep offence; a petition signed by four thousand clergymen and magistrates, and praying that legal proceedings might

be taken for the suppression of Socialist opinions, was presented by the Bishop of Exeter in the House of Lords, and Melbourne had to defend himself. He did so by speech and pen. In a letter to the late Sir Edward Baines he repudiated all sympathy with Owen's opinions, and admitted that he had put his name on the presentation card 'unguardedly and imprudently.' This was the sum of his offence, but it demanded some expiation, which was no doubt suffered in part at the poll-booth. It added to the unpopularity of the Government, and was not forgotten at the political crisis which was fast approaching.

CHAPTER XII

HIS FALL

Growing weakness of the Cabinet—Incidents of a protracted dissolution—Canada—The Syrian question—Palmerston's autocracy in foreign affairs—Melbourne keeps the peace—The Queen's Marriage—His fatherly approval—The troubles of the Ministry thicken—Embarrassed finance—The Corn Laws—Defeat on the Sugar Duties—A general election—The majority of ninety-one—Melbourne resigns—His parting interview with the Queen.

THE closing years of Lord Melbourne's administration have been styled inglorious, but they were in some respects memorable. By dint of unwearied patience the Irish measures which the Government had in view on first taking office were passed through Parliament. The tithe question was settled, the Irish Municipal Corporations were placed on a more popular basis, and a system of poor law relief was established in Ireland for the first time. These measures, it is true, were maimed and shorn of much of their efficacy by the amendments to which they were subjected in the House of Lords, where the Opposition, led by Lord Lyndhurst, the renegade Jacobin of other days, did all they could to resist pacificatory legislation. 'Aliens in blood, in language, and in religion' was the savage description Lord Lyndhurst applied to our Irish fellow-subjects. Melbourne's application to him of a remark once made of Lord Strafford was a fairly adequate retort: 'The malignity of his practices

is hugely aggravated by his vast talents, whereof God has given him the use, but the Devil the application.' The Government had to surrender on many points, but they did their best, and concluded that half the good they intended was better than nothing. In England a beginning was made with popular education. The Committee of Privy Council was established, and a grant of 30,000*l.* in aid of Voluntary Schools was the forerunner of the more elaborate system and the larger expenditure of to-day. It must be owned that on the education question Melbourne was somewhat of an obscurantist. He did not share Lord John Russell's enthusiasm. He never believed that the mixed system in Ireland would work well, and to this extent his sagacity has been proved by the result. As regards one main plea for extending education in England—its probable effect in diminishing crime, he wrote to Lord John: 'I do not myself much like connecting the subject of education with criminal law. It leads to the doctrine which is held by many, that the uninstructed are not responsible, and therefore not fit objects of punishment.' He 'doubted whether there was anybody who had not been told that there was a God who would punish him, that Jesus Christ had made an atonement for the sins of the world, and that it was displeasing to God, and therefore wrong, to murder and rob.' He thought these elementary doctrines were 'strongest in themselves,' and would only be weakened by explanation. He admitted, however, that Lord John was likely to be better informed than he was, and happily Lord John had his way. One other measure reflects honour on the waning administration. They gave their support to Rowland Hill, and the country thenceforth enjoyed the inestimable boon of penny postage.

It was a seething time in colonial affairs. The old system of irresponsible government in the colonies was coming to an end, and a 'new departure' was forced upon Parliament by an outbreak in Canada. The people demanded an elective Legislature. The demand had driven King William almost frantic. He declaimed about his prerogative in the Privy Council and in his interviews with colonial officials. It was not his fault that our immortal blunder with the thirteen American colonies was not repeated. The first outbreak in Canada was promptly suppressed, but it broke out again, and, with sympathisers on the American side of the St. Lawrence, it involved us in difficulties with the United States. The Government sent over Lord Durham as Governor-General with large powers. As a Radical in politics he seemed likely to win colonial confidence. Unhappily his rashness marred the experiment. He took over with him in official positions two men of spotted reputation, Mr. Turton and Mr. Wakefield. Melbourne inveighed vehemently against the imprudence, but all he could do with the wilful Earl was to insist that at least they should be kept in the background. On arriving in Canada Lord Durham published an amnesty, with numerous exceptions, the excepted persons being subjected to the penalty of death if they ventured to return. The amnesty ordinance made a great uproar in Parliament. It was held to be a violation of the first principles of justice, and Lord Durham was instructed to announce its disallowance. He did this in a proclamation which was virtually an appeal from the Government to the people of Canada, and he was at once recalled, but before the order of recall could reach him, he had thrown up his post and landed at Plymouth. Never-

theless, his report on Canadian affairs, drawn up by Mr. Charles Buller, suggested the outlines of a constitutional system, and under his successor, Mr. Poulett Thompson, afterwards Lord Sydenham, a beginning was made in that wise administration which restored loyalty to the colony, and prepared the way for the federation of all the provinces in the present Dominion of Canada.

On the Syrian question the Government narrowly escaped a war with France. Mehemet Ali, not satisfied with the Pashalic of Egypt, entertained aggressive designs against the Sultan, the final scope of which could only be conjectured. His troops were victorious in Syria and in full march towards Constantinople when England interfered. Their rival views on Egypt prevented harmonious action between England and France. It was the rehearsal of a very recent story. To checkmate France, Lord Palmerston negotiated a treaty between England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia for the protection of Turkey, and a fleet was sent to the Mediterranean under orders for instant action. France was furious. At home the Cabinet was torn asunder. Throughout the whole affair Lord Palmerston acted like an autocrat, but nevertheless with much suppleness, bidding only for delay. Lord John Russell was incensed at the high-handed proceedings of his colleague. He urged that conciliatory overtures should be made to France, but he urged still more persistently that Lord Palmerston should submit his measures and his despatches beforehand to the judgment of the Cabinet. Melbourne played the part of mediator between them, but he was too closely associated with Palmerston and had too much sympathy with him to take any peremptory measures. There was an absence of central control. 'We are a

republic,' said Lord Holland, but the Cabinet was not even a republic. It was a group of departmental chiefs, each of whom was clothed with plenary power. Lord John Russell's voice was absolute in home affairs, and Lord Palmerston was resolved that no one should overrule himself in foreign affairs. The quarrel then begun had a memorable revival a dozen years later. For the present Lord Palmerston was triumphant. His plans succeeded. The blow struck at Acrè finished the business, and the resignation of M. Thiers was an admission on the part of France that his policy had prevailed.

Melbourne might well be careless of Cabinet bickerings. He knew they could not last long. Fate with winged foot was hastening to put an end to them, and the work he liked best was at Court, where for the time he had a new pupil. The Queen's marriage had been at last a sudden affair. Prince Albert had visited England in 1836, but from the period of her accession the Queen had kept up no correspondence with him as she had done before, and it was understood that she wished three or four years to pass by before thinking of marriage. His relatives were naturally averse to any long postponement. His father said that if he waited till his twenty-first, twenty-second, or twenty-third year, it would be impossible for him to begin any new career, and that his whole life would be marred if the Queen should change her mind. In the 'Early Years of the Prince Consort,' the tender offering laid in later days at the shrine of youthful love, the Queen tells us that 'she never entertained any idea of this, nor,' she adds, 'can the Queen now think without indignation against herself of her wish to keep the Prince waiting for probably three or four years, at the risk of ruining all his prospects for life, until she might feel inclined to marry.' None would wish to disturb the exquisite pleasure

of an act of penance which only love could impose, though we may think that the Queen's self-reproaches were undeserved. So late as July 15, 1839, the Queen wrote to her uncle, King Leopold, strongly desiring delay; but it was not to be. On October 10, Prince Albert arrived at Windsor on a visit to the Queen, and the white flag of the maiden fortress went up at the first sight of the handsome summoner. On the 15th the Queen 'proposed.'

These facts dispose of a passage in Greville's 'Memoirs,' which implies that on this occasion the Queen withheld her usual confidence from Melbourne. Mr. Greville says: 'The Queen settled everything about her marriage herself, and without consulting Melbourne at all on the subject, not even communicating to him her intentions. The reports were already rife while he was in ignorance, and at last he spoke to her, told her that he could not be ignorant of the reports, nor could she; that he did not presume to inquire what her intentions were, but that it was his duty to tell her that if she had any it was necessary that her ministers should be apprised of them. She said she had nothing to tell him, and about a fortnight afterwards she informed him that the whole thing was settled.' It appears that the Queen did not know her own mind as to marriage till the 10th, and that on the 15th she was a betrothed bride, so that a fortnight before she might well say to Melbourne that she had nothing to tell him. The Queen's letter to King Leopold announcing her engagement refers to Melbourne in terms of utter frankness and simplicity. It is written on the day on which the engagement took place, and the conversation with Melbourne must have been earlier. The Queen says: 'Lord Melbourne, whom I have of course consulted about the whole affair, quite approves my choice, and expresses

great satisfaction at this event, which he thinks in every way highly desirable. Lord Melbourne has acted in this business, as he has always done towards me, with the greatest kindness and affection. We also think it better, and Albert quite approves of it, that we should be married very soon after Parliament meets, about the beginning of February.'

The preparations for the marriage furnished Melbourne with a good deal of congenial occupation. There was the declaration to be prepared which the Queen was to read in the Privy Council. 'Precisely at two,' says the Queen in her journal, 'I went in. The room was full, but I hardly knew who was there. Lord Melbourne I saw looking kindly at me with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I felt my hands shook, but I did not make one mistake. I felt most happy and thankful when it was over.' The annuity to be settled on the Prince had to be fixed upon. The Government proposed 50,000*l.*, and Melbourne told the Queen that in this the Cabinet anticipated no difficulty whatever. But there was a difficulty. Mr. Hume proposed to reduce the annuity to 21,000*l.*, and on this being negatived, an amendment was carried on the motion of Colonel Sibthorpe, supported by Sir Robert Peel, reducing it to 30,000*l.* Melbourne said to Stockmar a few days later: 'The Prince will be very angry at the Tories. But it is not the Tories only whom the Prince has to thank for cutting down his allowance. It is rather the Tories, the Radicals, and a great proportion of our own people.' Some questions were raised as to whether the Prince was a Protestant. Melbourne told the Queen that he was afraid to say anything about the Prince's religion, and that the subject would not therefore be alluded to in the declaration to be made in the Privy Council. But there were suspicious

sticklers in the House of Lords, and the Prince had to be described as Protestant in the Annuity Bill. The precedence to be assigned to the Prince was a more ticklish question. Melbourne was pestered by all the Royal Dukes, and what with their remonstrances and the Act of Henry VIII. for the placing of peers, the matter was sufficiently intractable. A paper drawn up by Mr. Greville at last pointed a way out of the dilemma, and whereabouts the Prince should stand or sit was left to be determined by the Queen's prerogative. In other words, if we can bear the simplicity of the solution, the Queen might put him where she pleased.

It was a strange transition from the trivialities of Court etiquette to the serious difficulties which beset the Cabinet. There were two distinct growths of public opinion, Radicalism and Conservatism, and both were unfavourable to the Government. The Whigs, who at one time seemed to represent the whole of the Liberal following, were becoming more and more a left centre party, and the party to the left of them, by no means the extreme left, was rapidly increasing. A similar change was taking place on the right, though there the number of the right centre, where Sir Robert Peel planted his banner, was increasing, while the more extreme members of the party, those who could remember the good old days of 'Church and King,' were diminishing. The forces under the Conservative leader were every day becoming more numerous and more compact, and could be relied upon to move together at the word of command. The growth of Radicalism could not be prevented, yet, in proportion as it grew, there was a certain amount of reaction in public opinion towards the Conservative side. There was once more a good deal of social

disturbance in various parts of the country. There was an absurd outbreak in South Wales which had to be put down by military force. Chartism was rife at Birmingham and in Lancashire. The six points became the programme for a new agitation. Eloquent working-class leaders were springing up who had a leaning towards physical force and did not mind risking the treadmill. Most formidable apparition of all, the Anti-Corn Law League was sending forth its lecturers into all parts of the land, and a cry was being raised for cheap bread. Trade was miserably bad. Manufactures were depressed. In towns like Stockport half the looms were silent. The people were beginning to perceive that the same law which made bread dear restricted the labour and lowered the wages of the workmen. This was becoming a general conviction, though on the question of method there was a difference of opinion. The free-traders thought it wiser to assail one clearly pernicious law or set of laws, while the chartists were for availing themselves of the prevailing distress in order to accomplish organic changes.

The ministry drifted with the stream. They had to revise their opinions. The ballot was recognised as an open question. Lord John Russell offered some encouragement to the motion for a ten-pound franchise in the counties. Some change was seen to be necessary in the Corn Laws. Lord John advocated the abolition of the sliding scale and the substitution of a fixed duty of eight shillings per quarter. Melbourne was the one whom it was the most difficult to move on this question. He doubted whether 'the property or the institutions of the country could stand' the free importation of corn. A year or two before he had expressed the opinion that 'the minister who should try to carry the

total abolition of the Corn Laws would be considered fit for a lunatic asylum.' But even Melbourne came round. In February 1841 Lord John Russell brought the question of the Corn Laws before the Cabinet, and it was decided that they should take their stand on a fixed duty. Perhaps the discussion was not very luminous, or it had perhaps been left in the hands of the experts and the conclusion arrived at was not very distinctly announced. At any rate, it is probably of this meeting that a story is told which Mr. Walpole finds in a letter from Lord Clarendon, but which may be given in its raciest version. Just as they were breaking up, Melbourne shouted to his colleagues from the top of the staircase: 'Stop a bit; is it to lower the price of bread, or isn't it? It doesn't much matter which, but we must all say the same thing.' It is perhaps as well to remember that such stories are quite susceptible of a little garnishing.

The state of the finances pointed to the necessity of some fiscal change. There had been deficits year after year, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had now to deal with one of a couple of millions. Mr. Baring resolved to try what some approach to free trade would do. There were differential duties in favour of sugar and timber imported from the colonies. It was proposed to reduce the duties on foreign sugar and timber and to raise those imposed on the colonial products, thereby reducing the difference between them. The anticipated gain to the revenue was fixed at 1,300,000*l*. The battle was fought over the Sugar Bill, and, after a debate which lasted over eight nights, the Government were beaten by a majority of thirty-six. Then arose the question whether they should resign or dissolve. Melbourne was opposed to a dissolu-

tion, but the majority of the Cabinet were against him and he gave way. Writing to the Queen, he said: 'Of course I felt I could but go with them; so we shall go on, bring in the old sugar duties, and then, if things are in a pretty good state, dissolve.' But Sir Robert Peel did not lend himself to this arrangement. He saw his opportunity and resolved to charge home. On finding that they were prepared to go on, he moved a vote of want of confidence and carried it by a majority of one. This left the Government no alternative, and on June 23 Parliament was dissolved. The new Parliament met in August, an amendment to the address, moved by Sir Robert Peel, was carried by a majority of ninety-one, and the Government forthwith resigned.

The long agony was over. For a couple of years the Melbourne administration had been dying a lingering death, and at last the end had come. They might perhaps have died with greater dignity. They might have folded their robes around them and chosen the moment of dissolution. Instead of this, they held on to the furthest bounds of fate and yielded only to necessity. Perhaps they did right. Why should men or governments die before their time? If office is a trust, they might well consider themselves bound to remain in till they were turned out. In this way they divested themselves of all responsibility for the result, and threw it upon those to whom it properly belonged, the representatives of the people in Parliament, and ultimately upon the people themselves. They had fought a gallant fight with the reactionary forces in the Lords, and practically raised a question which has been growing in gravity ever since. If it must be said that Melbourne's career as Prime Minister had not been brilliant, there remains the fact that his administration was one

of the longest of the century, that it had passed many useful measures, and had been more successful in dealing with Ireland than any other administration before or since. And there is the further title to our grateful recognition, that he played an important part at the critical period of a long reign, and by his devotion to the Queen rendered services to the State of which we have reaped the benefit through a peaceful constitutional development of fifty years.

It was far easier for Melbourne to resign the cares of Government than to bid farewell to Windsor. On the evening of his resignation he saw the Queen by special request. 'He praised,' says the Queen's 'Journal,' 'the speeches of Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel.' 'Lord Melbourne himself,' writes Sir Theodore Martin, 'was in very good spirits, saying the only person he was sorry for was the Queen, and that it was very painful for him to leave her. "For four years I have seen you every day; but it is so different now from what it would have been in 1839. The Prince," Lord Melbourne added, "understands everything so well, and has a clever, able head." The Queen saw Lord Melbourne next morning before he left the Castle, and was much affected in taking leave of him. "You will find," he said, "a great support in the Prince; he is so able. You said when you were going to be married that he was perfection, which I thought a little exaggerated then, but really I think now that it is in some degree realised."' Similar testimony to the Prince's abilities was conveyed in a parting note, a copy of which the Queen sent to King Leopold with this remark: 'This naturally gave me great pleasure and made me very proud, as it comes from a person who is no flatterer, and would not have said it if he did not think so and feel so.'

It was not a final adieu. The Queen's friendship for Melbourne was cherished to the last. While the recent elections were going on she had visited him at Brocket. The Queen told Sir Robert Peel that she could not break off all intercourse with Lord Melbourne, and Sir Robert heartily acquiesced. At a memorable crisis in the career of the new Premier we shall meet his rival again at Windsor, an indulged and chartered guest.

CHAPTER XIII

BROCKET

A speech at Melbourne—Brocket reminiscences—Augustus Lamb—Lord Egremont—The picture in the Great Saloon—Not left in utter loneliness—His interest in politics—Again in the House of Lords—A Windsor incident—Still ready to go if 'sent for'—His health steadily declining—Not included in the Ministerial combination of 1846—His last vote by proxy—An episode of 1832—The end.

LORD MELBOURNE lived six years after resigning office, but for him they were eventless years, and there remains but little to be said. He went for a few weeks into Derbyshire in search of quiet after the excitement of the political crisis, but he was afraid of 'some address or something of that sort.' 'Melbourne itself,' he writes to Lord John Russell, 'is a large manufacturing and political village; it is twenty-five miles from Leicester, seventeen from Nottingham, eight from Derby—rather an inflammable neighbourhood. Perhaps, however, they will leave me quite alone, and if they do not I must manage as well as I can.' They did not leave him quite alone. The presence of the ex-Premier in the place from which he derived his title was an occasion which could not be allowed to pass unimproved. Addresses were presented to him from Derby and Melbourne, and he had to make a speech. He was, of course, duly sensible of the honour of receiving such proofs of appreciation from

'the enlightened and opulent' county town, and from his 'immediate neighbours and friends.' Though he regarded it as a 'bore' beforehand, he was no doubt glad of the opportunity of reviewing his administration, and of dwelling upon the benefits, political and social, which it had been the means of conferring upon the country. In deprecating the inconveniences of popularity he was not to be taken at his word—as, indeed, few men are—and if it had been possible to present him with addresses on an average of one in three months, it is probable that his sense of political loneliness would have been greatly soothed, and his remaining days made more happy.

His fixed abode was henceforth at Brocket. Among its sheltering woods and its soft pastures by the banks of the dreamy Lea he found the solace of sad but dear memories, and could live over again the days of his youth. It was there that Sir Joshua Reynolds used to give him a ride on his foot as a reward for being quiet while some fresh touches were added to his portrait. It was there that he had brought his wife when love had not yet lost its hues of visionary romance, and there were no wayward impulses to disturb his repose. The latest recollections the place revived were, perhaps, the saddest. It was there that he had witnessed the departure of his only son, whom he had loved and watched over from childhood with more than a mother's tenderness. 'Augustus,' he wrote at the time, 'was lying on a sofa near me; he had been reading, but I thought had dropped asleep. Suddenly he said to me in a quiet and reflective tone: "I wish you would give me some franks that I may write and thank people who have been kind in their inquiries." The pen dropt from my hand as if I had been struck; for the words and the manner were as

clear and thoughtful as if no cloud had ever hung heavily over him. I cannot give any notion of what I felt; for I felt it to be, as it proved, the summons they call lightning before death. In a few hours he was gone.' This event occurred just on the eve of his four years' residence at court. The parental void created prepared him for a new and dutiful attachment which was almost parental. The sense of bereavement was assuaged till it was almost forgotten by incessant occupation with a task in which his best feelings found scope for action. Now that he was suddenly released from all public duties, the emotions so pathetically described in the extract just given would come upon him afresh, and he had leisure to realise his loss.

Every room at Brocket carried his thoughts back to old days. The decoration and garniture of the place were memorials of his mother's taste and prodigality. She had lavished upon it all that artistic skill could furnish or that wealth could buy. In the saloon there hung a portrait of the Earl of Egremont, 'so wonderfully like Lord Melbourne,' says Mr. Hayward, 'that it is impossible to help being struck by it.' Late in life he was taking Sir Edwin Landseer and another visitor round the Grand Saloon, when Landseer, coming opposite the portrait, gave a start and involuntarily turned round to look at him. 'Ay,' said Lord Melbourne, 'you have heard that story, have you? But it's all a lie for all that.' Egremont had died a few years before, surrounded by a host of children and grandchildren, but without one whom the law could recognise as his heir. When his end was approaching, he sent for Melbourne, who, says Mr. Torrens, 'was seldom long without paying him a visit, and never ceased to delight in his original and suggestive conversation.' At this last interview, at the age of

eighty-five, 'he was in full possession of his faculties, and talked, as if done with life, of the condition of the country, and what he deemed the tendency of things.' Looking at the timepiece, he said, 'William, I have lived long enough to see the hand go round. In the first quarter of my time the world was nothing but profligate; in the next there came a great revival of puritanism; then came another spell of luxury and licence, and now you have a revival of religion once more.' Though he had come to differ from Melbourne in politics he was delighted with his success, and declared that the only blunder in his career which he could never understand was his 'mad choice of a wife.' Melbourne, who knew the whole of that delicate business better, was probably not prepared even then to say that he repented of the bargain, and on the point challenged he had perhaps shown more sanity than his censor.

It is said that he suffered much from mental depression at Brocket, and when the circumstances are considered there can be no wonder if he did. For twelve years he had been a member of the Government, he had been Premier for more than six, and for the greater part of that time he had been in constant attendance on the Queen. He had led a busy life, he had been the centre of important interests, the arbiter of Cabinet differences, the dispenser of patronage, a notable man in society. All at once his pleasant occupations ceased, and he was thrown upon himself, with nothing to do but to ruminate upon the past. Probably Brocket was not the best place for him, full as it was of melancholy associations. Six months at Cannes or a trip to Egypt or India would now be recommended, but such remedies were not then so much in fashion. Apart from his liking for books he had no employment and no source of enjoyment. In this respect

he was worse off than some of his friends. Lord Althorp found a large resource in sheep-breeding. Lord John Russell, when freed from Cabinet cares, would superintend his children's and step-children's tea-parties, or write a pamphlet, or meditate a drama, or compose a dissertation on the state of Europe. With Melbourne, social intercourse was the very breath of life, and when deprived of it he sank into torpor or uneasy restlessness. But he was not left, as has been imagined, to pine in utter loneliness. His brother Lord Beauvale and his wife made their home at Brocket for half the year. Lord Beauvale had been minister at Vienna, where Lord Palmerston did not find him too submissive an agent, and Melbourne had to keep the peace between them. Few men were better acquainted with the state of parties or more versed in the political gossip of the day. After a free-and-easy bachelorhood of sixty years, he had married a lady of twenty, who from the description given of her was almost perfect in character, in accomplishments, and in devotion to her husband. With such relatives always at hand there can have been no lack of sunshine or of breezy talk. His sister Emily, widow of Earl Cowper, had lately married Lord Palmerston, his friend and colleague. Broadlands and Panshanger were within easy reach. Visits could be easily exchanged, and a word at any time would bring his sister to Brocket. Lady Holland, the indomitable talker of Holland House, now in her widowhood, was often there. He had nephews and nieces who were not likely to forget him. Mrs. Norton occasionally sent him a sprightly letter. 'Who have you got at Brocket?' she writes. 'Does Emily hang her long gowns up, like banners of victory, in the cupboards? Does Lady Holland cut herself in four to help and serve you? Are Fanny Jocelyn's soft purple eyes

at your table, under the lamps? or does the "Minny" who rivals our own "Georgy" rouse you to any love and admiration of your own relations?' The two ladies first mentioned were his sister's daughters, married to Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Jocelyn. 'Georgy' was the Duchess of Somerset. These were openings into social life on its upper level. Elsewhere, his old secretary, Mr. Thomas Young, was always foraging for his entertainment, sending him 'long budgets dealing with every topic under the sun.' With these resources he had not to suffer many of the pangs of exile. He was not shut up to the consolations of pure philosophy.

In the session of 1842 he was in his place in the House of Lords, and took an active part in the debates. In the autumn he had an attack of palsy from which he never entirely recovered. This circumstance is sufficient to explain his partial exclusion from the counsels of his political friends. They cannot be charged with neglecting him. They wrote to him frequently to exchange opinions on the current politics of the day and to ask his advice, but it was clearer to them than it was perhaps to him that he could no longer be reckoned upon as a factor in party combinations. There is some evidence that he did not consider himself as altogether laid aside. Free Trade and the Corn Laws were the great questions of the hour, and he watched with eager curiosity the course taken by Sir Robert Peel, whose followers were becoming seriously alarmed by what he had already done and seemed likely to do in a free trade direction. It was possible that if he went much further his majority would break up, and then there would be a chance for the Whigs. Perhaps an eight-shilling fixed duty would triumph after all. 'If you have thoroughly made up your mind,' he writes to Lord John Russell in 1843, 'I wish you

would inform me what language you mean to hold respecting corn when Parliament meets. Of course you have quite dismissed from your mind the notion that the Government will move upon that subject. Peel would be an imbecile if he were to break up his party, and probably his administration, in that manner. He will remain quietly in his present position.' In this forecast his usual sagacity was wanting. Sir Robert Peel took the opposite course to that which he imagined. Hence his disappointment and anger when the final plunge was made. It did break up the Conservative party, and immediately opened a way to office for their opponents, but it was on the basis of entire free trade in corn, a policy which Melbourne was as yet by no means prepared to adopt. His anger at Peel's conversion broke out rather unseasonably. 'There has been a curious scene,' writes Greville, 'with Melbourne at Windsor, which was told me by Jocelyn, who was present. It was at dinner, when Melbourne was sitting next to the Queen. Some allusion was made to the expected measure, when Melbourne suddenly broke out: "Ma'am, it is a d—— dishonest act." The Queen laughed and tried to quiet him, but he repeated, "I say again, it is a very dishonest act," and then he continued a tirade against the abolition of the Corn Laws, the people not knowing how to look, and the Queen only laughing.' The Queen at last said that she wished to hear no more on the subject then, though she would be willing to speak with Lord Melbourne about it in private.

Holding such opinions on the vital question of the day, it is difficult to imagine that Melbourne can have expected to have a place found for him in Lord John Russell's ministry, as he is said to have done. Perhaps he only

wanted the compliment of an offer from his old friends. Perhaps he thought that as the question was settled once for all he might consistently acquiesce in what had been done by others though he could not have done it himself. No offer was made, but he received from Lord John a soothing letter :—'I submitted to the Queen yesterday the list of a new Ministry. I have not proposed to you to form a part of it, because I do not think your health is equal to the fatigues which any office must entail. For although there are offices with little business in themselves, the Parliamentary work has increased so greatly that a Lord Privy Seal, for instance, must take charge of committees, and be constantly engaged in assisting the leader of the House of Lords. I propose to put William Cowper (Melbourne's nephew) into his old place in the Treasury.' Melbourne replied :—'You have judged very rightly and kindly in making me no offer. I am subject to such frequent accesses of illness as render me incapable of any exertion. I am glad of what you intend about William Cowper. I do not think that he would mind being left out himself, but it would have been very unpalatable to his mother.' Two years before, when there was a rumour of an impending crisis in the Cabinet, he had held himself prepared to obey a summons from the Queen. The altered situation of affairs and his infirm health had changed his views, and his reply to Lord John Russell's letter may be taken to express what he really felt.

His work was done. His last vote in Parliament, given by proxy, was in favour of the Bill for the removal of Jewish disabilities. This was in May 1848. Through the summer and autumn he was visibly declining. Almost at the end an incident occurred which was at once ridiculous and painful. At the trial of Mr. Smith O'Brien on a charge of high

treason, a remarkable letter was produced by the defence. It was addressed to Sir William Napier, who in 1832 held the post of commander in the Midland counties. It was dated from the Home Office, signed 'T. Y.,' sealed with the official seal, and franked by Melbourne. The letter was not read in court, but it was published next day in the 'Freeman's Journal.' It was a suggestion to Napier that he might be asked to take command of the insurgent forces in the event of an insurrection. The case was too plain for mistake or contradiction. The letter was one of the pranks of his private secretary, Mr. Thomas Young, who had been trusted by his confiding employer not wisely but too well. Young was summoned from London to Brocket for explanations, and his confession and excuses were stammered out by the bedside. The press exploded with laughter, but it was no laughing matter for the dying statesman, whose prudence was so signally impeached. He felt the blow keenly, and it perhaps hastened his end. On November 22 the public were informed of his critical condition by the 'Morning Chronicle: 'It is feared that Lord Melbourne is dying. At one time the family at Brocket did not expect, on Thursday, that he would live through the day. On Friday he rallied; on Saturday morning he still continued rather better.' The hopeful signs were delusive. Two days later, on November 24, 1848, at the age of three score years and ten, he passed peacefully away.

INDEX

ABE

Abercrombie, Mr., 186-187
Abinger, Lord, 41
Act of Union, 51
Addington, Mr. (Lord Sidmouth), 52-53
Albert, Prince, 226-228, 233
Alien Act, Huskisson and, 56
'All the Talents' Ministry, 52-58, 176
Althorp, Lord 21-23, 43-44, 54-55, 61-62, 64-65; 68, 91, 94, 95, 115, 133, 141, 142, 150, 163, 166, 168-174, 178-186, 239
Anglesea, Marquis of, 142
Anti-Corn Law League, 230
'Anti-Jacobin,' Lamb and the, 25
Arnold, John (tradesman), 8
— Dr., 217-218
Attwood, Thomas, 151, 153, 155, 157

Bacon, Lord, 178
Baines, Sir Edward, 221
Balzac's 'Physiologie du mariage,' 80
Baring, Mr., 231
Bathurst, 115
Baxter, Richard (the Puritan), 4
Beauvale, Lord, 239
Bedford, Duke of, 23-26, 115
Belasyse, Lord, 14-15
Bentham, Jeremy, 107, 150
Berkeley, 28
Bessborough, the third Earl of, 42
— Lady, 79
Bexley, Lord, 115
Birmingham, 132, 148
— Political Union, 150, 152, 156, 157, 162
Bletchingly, Borough of, 117-118
Bonaparte, Fox and, 51
Bourne, Mr. Sturges, 119, 127
Bragge, Mr. Bathurst, 60
Brand, Mr., 58-59, 90
Brandon, Lord and Lady, 196
Brandreth, Jeremiah, 146
Brocket Hall, 10, 20, 33, 49, 85-86
— — Queen's visit to, 234; last days at, 236
Brooke, Lord, 2
Brougham, Lord, 100, 105, 116, 117, 140, 141, 147, 163, 172, 177-179, 183, 189-191
Brummel, Beau, 22, 38

DEV

Buckingham, Duke of, 3
Buller, Mr. Chas., 225
Bulwer, Mr. H. (Lord Dalling), 111
Burdett, Sir Francis, 97, 107, 116, 150, 152-153
Burghley, Lord, 2
Burke and Economical Reform, 16, 54
Bute, Lord, 206
Byron, Lord, and Lady Caroline Lamb, 75-79, 81-82; death of, 85

Calvert, Mr., 110
Campbell, Sir John, 198
Canada, 224-225
Canning, and the 'Anti-Jacobin,' 25; and Huskisson, 56, 57, 59, 61, 68, 88-91, 93, 95, 102, 113-117; death of, 118-119; 129-130, 138, 139
Caroline, Queen, 98-102
Cartwright, Major, 107
Casaubon, Isaac, 2
Catholic Association, the, 103-106, 121-122, 129, 136-139
— Emancipation, 51-52, 57-58, 89, 102-104, 112, 115, 164-166, 193-194
Chartism, 230
Church Rates Abolition Bill, 199-201
Civil Bill Process, 123
Clarendon and Sir John Coke, 3-4
Clarke, Mrs., 62-65
Clergy Bill, the, 104
Cobbett, 145
Coercion Bill, 168-173, 175
Coke, Sir John, and sons, 2-11
Comber (Brixton Gaol), 145-146
Conyngham, Lord, 202-203
Corn Laws, 230-231, 240-241
Corporation Act, 131, 180
Corruption in Ireland, 127
Cowper Earl, Emily, wife of, 13, 47, 84-85
— Lord and Lady, 44-45
— Wm., 242
Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 123
Cumberland, Duke of, 205

Dalling, Lord, 111
Denman, Lord Chief Justice, 22
Derby, Lord, 142, 166-171, 174, 183
Devonshire, Duke of, 119, 151

DIS

Disraeli, Mr., 197
Dissenters, Wm. Lamb on, 31-32, 131
Divorce Bills, 99
Dorchester Labourers, 160
Drummond, Henry, 145-146
— Thomas, 193-194
Dublin, Lamb at, 119-130
Dudley, Lord, 130, 133
Duncannon, Viscount, 116
Duncombe, Tom, 110-111
Dunning, and the Crown, 16
Durham, Lord, 169, 199, 224

EAST RETFORD, Borough of, 97, 131-132, 148
Education in England, 223
Egremont, Lord, 19, 31, 38, 237
Eldon, Lord, 100, 105, 113, 119, 138, 139
Ellis, Charles (Lord Stuart de Rothesay), 22
Erskine, Henry, 52
Essay, W. Lamb's first, at Cambridge, 23-25, and on the 'English Government,' 26
Eton, Wm. Lamb at, 22-23
Evans, De Lacy, 151

FARMERS and farm labourers, Melbourne on, 156-157
Fauconberg, Lord, 14
Fitzgerald, Mr. Vesey, 136, 137
Fitzwilliam, Lord, 11
Folkestone, Lord, 61, 65, 93
Fox, Mr., 18, 23-26, 50-53, 57, 67-68, 119, 139
France and Syria, 225
Francis, Duke of Bedford, 23-24, 26
Free Trade, 231, 240

GARRICK, David, 44
George III., 27, 39, 50, 58-61, 66; Regent appointed for, 67-69; death of, 98
George IV. (see also 'Prince of Wales'), accession of, 98; his wife, 98-102, 114-115, 118-119, 129, 138; death of, 139
Glasgow, Law and Philosophy at, 26-31
Glenelg, Lord, 199-200 (see Mr. Grant)
Goderich, Lord, 119, 129
Godolphin, 7
Godwin and Lady Caroline Lamb, 83-84
Gosset, Sir W., 193
Goulburn, Mr., 123, 128
Gower, Lord, and Huskisson, 56; Lady, 109
Graham, Sir Jas., 142, 170-171
Grampound, Borough of, 95-97
Grand Jury Presentments, 123
Grant, Mr. (Lord Glenelg), 130, 132, 133, 141
Grantley, Lord, 196
Grattan's Parliament, 137
Grenville, Lord, 50, 52
Greville, Fulke (Lord Brooke), 2

LAM

'Greville Memoirs,' the, 19-20, 144, 148, 153-154, 198-199, 200, 202-204, 213, 214, 216, 227-229, 241
Grey, Earl, 50, 52, 53, 57, 61, 115, 133, 140, 141, 147-148, 152, 157, 163-164, 169-174, 178, 188, 192, 194, 201, 213-215
'Gronow's Reminiscences,' Captain, 62-63

HABEAS CORPUS ACT, 93, 105
Hallam, the Historian, 22
Hall's Sermon on 'Modern Infidelity,' 31
Hampden, Dr., 218
Harrow, Lord Althorp at, 23
Hayward, Mr., 237
Hertford election, 110
Heterodoxy, Melbourne and, 220
Hill, Rowland, and Penny Postage, 223
Hobhouse, Mr., 83, 106-107, 150
Holland, Lord, 77, 129, 170, 212, 226
— Lady, 77, 239
Holmes, Sir Leonard, 96
Home Office, Melbourne at, 142-163, 185
Howick, Lord. See 'Earl Grey'
Hume's History, 5; Mr., 151, 194, 228
Huskisson, William, 55-57, 88, 113, 116, 117, 119, 130, 132-133, 136, 138; death of, 141
Hutcheson, Glasgow Professor, 28

INSOLVENT ACT, renewal of, 123
Insurrection Act, 121
Ireland (Lamb Chief Sec. for), 118-130, 136-137, 164-173, 193-194; Irish Question, 51, 103, 105, 106; Land Question in, 126; corruption in, 127; Church in, 166-170, 180, 187, 193-194; tithe war in 167, 170, 195; Poor Law Commission in, 179; Irish Corporation Bill, 199-201; Irish Tithe Bill, 200
Irving, Edward, 146

JAMAICA BILL, the, 213
Jury Bill, 122-123

KENT, Duchess of, and William IV., 200; and Queen Victoria, 205-206; Duke of, 220
Kinnaird, Chas., 29

LAMB, Sir Peniston (first Lord Melbourne), 11, 13-17
— son, 21, 35; death of, 46
Lamb, William (LORD MELBOURNE), ancestry of, 1-11; birth, 12; early years and education, 22-33; and the law, 37-42, 46; marriage, 42-43; his wife, 45-48, 71-87, 107, 118; death of, 133-134; in Parliament, 49-69, 88-111, death of his mother, 108; impecuniosity, 108-110; Chief Secretary for Ireland, 117-130; in the House of Lords, 135-137, 140; at the Home Office, 142-163, 185; Prime Minister,

174–176; and Lord Althorp, 179–183; and Lord Brougham, 183–184, 189; and King William IV., 188, 191–193; character, 190, 191; the Melbourne Administration, 195–196; and Lady Brandon, 196; and the Hon. Mrs. Norton, 196–199; and Queen Victoria, 204–216, 226–229, 234; and Church and State, 216–220; and R. Owen, 220–221; Cabinet difficulties, 229–233; at Brocket, 236–243; death of son, 236–237; last days and death, 238–243. See also 'Essays,' 'Letters,' 'Speeches,' &c.
Lamb, George, brother of Lord Melbourne, 106–107
Lamb, Lady Caroline (Lady Melbourne), 45–48, 71–87, 107, 118; death of, 133–134
Lamb, Matthew, 9–11
— Emily (Countess Cowper), 13, 47, 239
— George Augustus Frederick (son of William), 73, 236–237
Lancashire Sessions, Wm. Lamb and the, 40–42
Land Question in Ireland, 126
Landseer, Sir Edwin, 237
Langford, Dr., 31
Lansdowne, Lord, 52, 115, 119, 122, 124 130, 140, 157, 166, 179, 192
Lauderdale, Lord, 26–27
Lee, Alderman, 4
Lehzen, Baroness, and Queen Victoria, 205–207, 210
Leominster, Wm. Lamb, member for, 49
Leopold, King, 208, 212, 227, 233
Letters of William Lamb, 28 32; on Parliamentary Reform, 97–98; on Labour, 156–157; on Trades Unions, 158–159; to William IV., 180–183; to Lord Brougham, 189–191; on Church and State, 216–220
Lewis, Monk, 31
Littleton, Mr., 171–173
Liverpool, Lord, 69, 99–101, 112, 113, 116, 117, 138
Lyndhurst, Lord, 153, 200, 222
Lyttleton, Mr., 60
Lytton, Lord, and Lady Caroline Lamb, 80–81, 84–85

Mackintosh, Sir James, 106
Maclise's Portrait Gallery, 151
Manchester, 132, 148
Mansfield, Lord, 109
Marchant, Sir Denis le, 'Life of Lord Althorp,' 39, 40, 44
Martin, Dick, 128
— Sir Theodore, 233
May, Sir Erskine, 60–61
Mehemet Ali, 225
Melbourne, Lord. See 'William Lamb'
— Lord (first) and Lady, 15–22, 39
— Hall, 2–11; House, 16–17, 48, 68; life at, 73
Melville, Lord, 65, 115
Millar, Professor, 26–31
Milton, Lord, 61, 69
Minto, Lord, 39
Moore, 77
Morgan, Lady, 42–43, 77, 80
Municipal Corporations Bill, 195, 222
Mylne, Professor, 27–28

Napier, Sir William, 243
National Debt in 1817, 91–92
North, Lord, 15, 18
Norton, Hon. Mrs., 196–199, 239
Nottingham Castle, 150

O'Brien, Mr. Smith, 242–243
O'Connell and the Catholic Association, 103, 106, 121, 126, 137, 138, 165–169, 171–174, 187, 189, 193
Oliver (the spy), 145
O'Loghlen, Mr., 193
O'Meara, Rev., and Mrs. Clarke, 63–64
Orangemen, 194, 205
Owen, Robert, 160–162, 220–221

Palmerston, Lady, 13
— Lord, 61, 96, 130, 132, 133, 138, 140, 141, 153, 188, 199, 225–226, 239
Parkes, Joseph, 151, 153
Parliamentary Reform, 92, 95, 97–98, 113, 116; Bill, 140–141, 163–164
Parnell, Sir Henry, 140
Paving and Lighting Bill (Dublin), 122–123
Peel, Sir R., 113–115, 129, 131, 132, 137, 174, 183, 186, 188, 204, 208, 214–216, 228, 229, 232–234, 240
Penryn, Borough of, 97,.131–132
Pepys, the Lord Chancellor, 39–40
Perceval, Mr., 62
Perrin, Mr., 193
Peterloo Massacre, the, 94, 101
Petty, Lord Henry, see Lord Lansdowne
Petworth, 33
Philpott, Dr., of Exeter, 217
Pitt, Wm., 49–52; and Huskisson, 56, 67, 89
Place, Mr. Francis, 107, 109–110, 150–151
Plunket, Mr., 103, 126
Ponsonby, Caroline (Lamb's wife), 42–46
— Mr. G., 53, 61, 91
Poor Laws, 6, 162–163
Portland, Duke of, 58, 61
Poyntz, Mr., 44
Privy Council Committee, 223

Queens of England, the four, 206

Radicalism, growth of, 229
Radicals at Spa Fields, 92–93
Radnor, Lord, 61
'Rape of the Lock,' Thomas Coke's portrait in, 7–8

REF

Reform Bills, 140, 142, 146-149, 153-155 162, 173, 180, 200; Lord John Russell and, 213
Reid, 28
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 20-21, 236
Rice, Mr. Spring, 118, 128-130, 187
Richmond, Duke of, 171
Ripon, Earl, 171
Roebuck, Mr., 151
Rogers, 75, 77-78,
Romilly, Sir Samuel, 94, 106-107
Russell, Lord John, 90, 93, 95-97, 115, 131, 133, 141, 142, 147, 150, 166, 168-171, 173-174, 180, 182, 184, 186-188, 193-195, 199, 201, 212-214, 217, 223, 225-226, 230-231, 233, 235, 239, 240-242
— Mr., 84-85
— Rev. Lord W., 217

SANDER'S 'Lord Melbourne's Papers,' 216-217
Satan, Lord Melbourne and, 217
Scarlett, Mr. (Lord Abinger), 41
Schleiermacher's 'St. Luke,' 219
Schomberg, Marshal, 6
Selwyn, George, 15
Shadwell, the Vice-Chancellor, 22
Sheridan, R. B., 52; granddaughter of, 196
Shiel, 125
Sibthorpe, Colonel, 228
Sidmouth, Lord, 52-53, 93, 159
Six Acts, the, 94-95, 101
Smith, Adam, 28
— Assheton, 22
Southwell, town of, 9-10
Speeches, maiden, William Lamb's, 57; on a constitutional question, 58-60; about sinecures, 66; on Reform Bill, 148-149
Spencer, Earl. See 'Lord Althorp'
— the first Earl, 42-43; Lady, 44; Lord, 52, 54, 115, 215
Stanley, Mr. (Lord Derby), 142, 166-171, 174, 183, 194
Stewart, Chas. (Marquis of Londonderry), 22
— Dugald, 26
Stockmar's 'Life' (Baron), 182, 210; Queen Victoria, Melbourne, and 208-212, 228
Strafford, Lord, 4, 222
Sugar Bill, 231
Sumner, John Bird, 22
Sussex, Duke of, 203
Sutton, Sir C. Manners, 187
Swallow, Major, 4
Swift's 'Journal to Stella,' 8-9
'Swing,' 144
Sydenham, Lord, 225
Syrian Question, the, 225-226

YOU

TAMWORTH, Sir Robert Peel and, 186
Tavistock, Lord, 115, 214
Tenterden, Lord, 196
Test Act, 131, 180
Thiers, M., 226
Thirlwall, Dr. Connop, 219-220
Thompson, Mr. Poulett (Lord Sydenham), 225
Tierney, 116
Times, Brougham and the, 183-184
Tindal, Justice, 198
Tithe Bill in Ireland, 170, 195, 200
Tithe Composition Act, 123-124
Torrens, Mr., 'Memoirs of Lord Melbourne,' 19, 27, 35, 39, 43, 45, 73-75, 86, 93, 108-109, 125, 219, 237
Trades Unions, 158-161
Trimmer, Mrs., 29, 45
Tullibardine, Marquis of, 22
Turton, Mr., 224

VANE, Sir Henry, 4
Victoria, accession and coronation of Queen, 202-216; marriage of, 226-229; and Lord Melbourne, 233, 241
Villiers, Geo., 148
Voluntary Schools, 223

WADE, Rev. A., 161-162
Wakefield, Mr., 224
Wales, the Prince of, 18-19, 36, 39, 50, 67-69, 73. See also 'George IV.'
Walpole, Mr. S., and the National Debt, 92; and Lord J. Russell, 195; and the Queen, 214; and Lord Clarendon, 231
Ward, Mr., 171
Ward, Rev. John, 6-7
Wardle, Colonel, and the Duke of York, 62
Wellesley, Lord, 103-104, 121-122, 124, 129, 171-172
Wellington, Duke of, 113-115, 129-130, 132-138, 137-140, 143, 145, 153, 158, 174, 183, 186, 192, 198, 204, 208, 214
Westmoreland, Lady, 77; Lord, 115
Whately, Archbishop, 217-218
Whigs, Lamb and the, 53-54, 67-68
Whitbread, Mr., 61, 65
William IV., 139-140, 147-148, 150, 158; and Melbourne, 174-176, 179-186, 191-193, 199; and Lord Brougham, 177-179; death of, 202, 204; and Canada, 224
Wordsworth, Dr., 219

YORK, Duke of, and Lady Melbourne, 17; scandal concerning, 62-65; Prince of Wales and, 68-69; and the Clergy Bill, 104-105; death of, 112; funeral, 119
Young, Mr. Thos., 151-152, 240, 243

Spottiswoode & Co. Printers, New-street Square, London.

00025889

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018